# An illustrated HISTORY of MUSIC

by Marc Pincherle

Reynal & Company New York

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#### An illustrated History of Music

Edited by Georges and Rosamond Bernier

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by Marc Pincherle

translated by Rollo Myers

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MUSIC LIBRARY

#### Foreword

The dictionaries in France do not include music among the Fine Arts. This is not merely a linguistic anomaly but the expression of an actual state of affairs which in point of fact might not exist tomorrow.

In the far distant past, in the early Middle Ages, Music was taught along with Arithmetic, Geometry and Astronomy.

In the 13th Century the earliest Universities gave it a place in the quadrivium, the higher division of the 'liberal Arts'.

Today we see that it has sunk to the level of an art of entertainment—a superfluous luxury which an honest man can dispense with without incurring the stigma of stupidity—or rather could do so until quite recently.

For great changes are taking place. The development of broadcasting and the recording industry (whose activities have increased
tenfold since the introduction of the longplaying record), the European
"Jeunesses Musicales" clubs, festivals and other influences which need
not be enumerated here, are among the reasons why music of all kinds
occupies an increasingly important place in our lives. And if for
certain listeners its role is merely to supply a background of sound to
which they need pay no particular attention, for others, on the contrary,
whose numbers are increasing every day, music is becoming a necessity
for the mind and heart. It is for the latter that this book is intended,
more especially for those who, as instinctive musicians, believe that
music for them must remain a closed book because they do not know
its grammar (as if it were necessary to know how to paint in order
to love Vermeer or Cézanne).

I have tried to guide them through an immense domain, and to do so I have had to set myself limits both as regards time and space.

I have not attempted to deal with controversial points which may be of great interest to the learned but which it would be out of place to discuss here, e.g. where, when, how did music originate? Which came first, rhythm or melody? To what extent was polyphony known to the Egypt of the Pharaohs and the Greeks of the classical period?...

Nor have I touched upon the exotic aspects of music in which I include the learned art of ancient China and India as well as the folk-lore of primitive peoples.

My primary concern is with western music starting at a point when it begins to show an uninterrupted continuity linking it with that which we hear today, that is to say from the time when the music of the Roman Church began to take a definite form.

I have been obliged here and there to employ a few technical terms which it was impossible to avoid, but I have endeavoured to give a clear explanation of those which lie outside the sphere of elementary knowledge.

Considerations of space leave little room for biographies or anecdotes.

However interesting the lives of some of the great musicians may be, there is plenty of information about the most famous of them available to those who seek it; what is of primary importance is to throw light upon their creative activities and on the part they have played in the development of their art. And that is the purpose of this book.

#### From the earliest times to the pre-classical age



#### The distant past

Music makes its appearance in the West in the first centuries of the Christian Era in such a humble guise that we might be tempted to think that this was when it began, had we not proof of the existence of an art which had already reached an advanced stage in the East some thirty-five centuries B.C.

In those distant times the inhabitants of Mesopotamia played on various instruments; there are concert scenes on Chaldean bas-reliefs; and in the excavations of Ur, the capital of the Sumerians, more or less well-preserved fragments have been discovered of harps, lyres and a sort of double oboe which was probably the predecessor of the Greek aulos.

The Egypt of the Pharaohs is still richer in relics of this sort. As early as the fourth dynasty, that is to say 2,700 B. C., the paintings and basreliefs found in the royal tombs often represent groups of performers on musical instruments resembling our modern orchestras. The names and biographical dates of the most celebrated court musicians have been preserved, which shows how important their duties were; and all museums devoted to Egyptology possess numerous examples of flutes, cymbals, sistra and harps of various design.

With the growth of other Eastern and Far Eastern civilisations we find that there is always a place reserved for music which is sometimes associated with warlike cults or manifestations, sometimes considered as the necessary complement of poetry, and sometimes, as in China, closely connected with a far-reaching code of symbols which conferred upon it in addition to its value as an art, the power of regulating -or even disturbing-the behaviour of individuals and of the State, of reflecting the movement of the heavenly bodies and of being at one and the same time a method of passing the time, an ethical code, a political system and a cosmogony.

Its power over the human mind was then so strong (it has grown weaker since in proportion as it has become more widely diffused) that it was generally supposed to possess magical properties. The myths of Orpheus, Amphion and Arion are evidence of this belief which persisted long after the Middle Ages and is reflected in the folk-lore of

■ Stele dedicated to Hor-Akhti by the singer Amon. Painted on wood. 22nd Dynasty (10th cent. B.C.). Paris, Louvre. This multi-stringed harp is already a considerable advance on the primitive harp in use since the 4th Dynasty, which was smaller and had only three or four strings.

countries as distant from each other as the countries of Islam and Scandinavia.

Unfortunately, although we are rich as regards textual documentation and iconography, we know very little about the actual music to which all this documentation relates. We have no record of what the Chaldeans and Egyptians may have sung or played; at most have we been able to reconstitute a few of their melodic scales.

As to the main body of Hebrew music, although there is no doubt that most of it is of very ancient origin, it has up till now been impossible to classify it according to any strict system of chronology; and in view of the lateness of the date when it first began to be written down it is not possible to distinguish with any certainty between the original elements it contained and the additions and deformations that have accumulated in the course of time.

The case of Greek music is different. The learned treatises of Aristoxenes of Tarentum, Claudius Ptolemy, Aristide Quintilian, etc., have provided us with exact information as to the theory of this music which has been supplemented by the philosophers from the point of view of ethics and aesthetics. Moreover our Hellenic scholars have brought to light and transcribed in modern notation a dozen fragments of musical works; these, however, are too short and too bare and remote from our time for it to be possible for us to recapture the spirit in which they were performed or listened to.

#### Origins of Christian music

It could be said, therefore, that we know less about music at the dawn of the Christian era than we do about Greek music in the time of Aristoxenes. The first four centuries of our era are still hidden under a thick veil; after that we can gradually discern the outlines of a liturgical music as to the sound of which we know nothing until the ninth century, when a rudimentary system of notation that was decipherable, allowing for a certain margin of hypothesis, first made its appearance.

After this, progress will be relatively rapid and above all will reveal a remarkable degree of continuity. According to the historians, the year 1453 marked a definite severance between two stages of civilisation, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance; in reality, however, this severance was no more noticeable in music than in other spheres of human activities—at least not at that time. If there was a break in continuity between two ways of thinking and

feeling, this happened well before the fall of Constantinople during that confused period which lasted until the end of the barbarian invasions when Greco-Roman civilisation collapsed and its successor was not yet strong enough to assert itself.

It is on emerging from this tunnel that modern music began to develop. We can see the beginnings of this evolution most clearly in sacred music, for the following simple reasons: it was no part of the duties of theoreticians, who were mostly monks, and still less of the Fathers of the Church, to give us information about secular music; moreover the first music to be written down was liturgical music which had an all-important part to play. Furthermore, the popular musicians, strolling fiddlers and jugglers, whose art was primarily one of improvisation, had neither the knowledge required to commit their inspirations to paper nor, probably, any desire to make them available in this way to possible rivals.

But it is clear that secular music existed, and that it assumed many forms, such as songs inspired by places or trades, or magic, war-like, satirical or drinking songs, etc., all of which had various origins, some dating back to Greco-Roman antiquity, and even earlier, and generally inspired by historical events, migrations and invasions, cultural advances and set-backs and those vagaries of fashion which in the fourth century aroused the indignation of St. Basil: "There are towns where from morning to evening one can attend all sorts of public spectacles, and one is obliged to admit that the more the people hear of lascivious and immoral songs the more they wish to hear". However, several centuries will elapse before we have any written record of this secular music. But to return to sacred music: in the early Church it had primarily a utilitarian function. It was found that an excellent method of assisting worshippers to pray together was to base the prayer on a very simple chant, very much in the nature of a recitation designed on simple rhythmic and melodic lines. Evangelisation having spread from Western Asia to the boundaries of countries where the Hebrew psalmody had been adopted, many historians think that this psalmody must have served as a model; indeed, sufficiently characteristic resemblances between the Jewish and Christian liturgies have been found to suggest that they were affiliated, not to mention the actual borrowing of forms of acclamation such as alleluia or amen.

But the real source and centre of evangelisation was Antioch, a Syrian city of Hellenic culture; it was from there that St. Paul began his career as a preacher, in the Greek language;



Harpist and Singer. Painted on limestone. Circa 2700 B.C. Paris, Louvre. The singer is conducting the instrumentalists. The harpist is playing on a seven-stringed harp more primitive than the one shown opposite.

and when he invited the faithful in Colossus or Ephesus to sing "psalms, hymns and spiritual canticles" it is quite possible that the musical basis of these chants, which were intended for communities in which the plebeian element was predominant, consisted of Greek popular melodies. In the presence of conflicting theories with regard to the origins of Christian music, it should be remembered that the countries of the Middle East on the shores of the Mediterranean had always communicated with each other from the earliest times. In this connection Curt Sachs quoted a very interesting passage from Herodotus, writing in the fifth century B.C.: "The Egyptians have a certain melody which is also sung in Phoenicia, Cyprus and other places under a different title in each country. It is almost identical with the melody which is known to the Greeks under the name of Linos".

#### Alternating chants

How were the first chants of the Christian Church performed? At first, whether the melody was simple or ornate, they were entrusted to a soloist, and not to the uneducated congregation. But some psalms used to end with an alleluia or a short refrain which was easy to remember, and it became customary for this to be sung in unison by the congregation. And this was the beginning of a responsorial form of psalmody, a dialogue between the soloist and a tutti, a distant and primitive forcrunner of the concertante style. According to recent discoveries, this opposition between a soloist and a chorus had already been practised in the ancient Egypt of the Pharaohs.

The reacclimatisation of this practice among the early Christians met with some opposition; the ascetics of the second and third centuries objected to it fearing lest this communal singing might become too agreeable to the detriment of austerity.

Such was the opinion of certain Fathers of the Church. Others, more numerous, reacted against this view and obtained satisfaction. Soon, even, Christian worship having emerged from clandestinity after the Edict of Milan (313), the gatherings of the faithful necessitated larger premises, and the solo psalmody, interrupted by only brief responses, was no longer sufficient to fill the new basilicas. Recourse was then had to communal singing, and the



Woman playing the kithara. Attic Cup. 460-430 B.C. Paris, Louvre.

congregation was allowed to sing the whole psalm. Perhaps in order to make this easier, the congregation was divided into two choirs which sang alternately,

and only joined in unison in the refrain. This method of performance, known as antiphony (whence comes the word anthem, paradoxically used to indicate the refrain which was precisely where the opposition between the two choirs ceased) probably had its origin in Antioch where, according to the historian Theodoret, it was in use towards the middle of the fourth century. It is thought that at first one choir consisted of men and the other of women and children, the two groups answering each other at the octave (antiphony, in Greek theory, designated precisely that interval). Was this really an innovation? A document dating from some 3000 B.C. provides evidence that in the country of the Sumerians it was customary for two choirs of women's voices to sing antiphonally. According to a fairly widespread tradition, at about the time when the practice of antiphonal singing was beginning (or had been revived) at Antioch, St. Ephraim, the deacon who was also a great poet, taught women at Edesse in Eastern Syria to sing in this way psalms which he adapted to popular melodies in the same way that the Heresiarch Bardaisan used to do. Like Arius and other leaders of heretical sects Bardaisan used music as a means of spreading his doctrines. He fitted his texts to well known tunes, a practice which ensured for his propaganda the widest diffusion which was all the greater because, as these texts were divided into regular stanzas, the same air could be used for all the verses of the hymn. St. Ephraim, however, and others who followed his example, found

Military Musicians. (Dulcimer, harp-lyre, ► cymbals). Alabaster bas-relief. Palace of Assurbanipal at Nineveh. 7th century B.C. Paris, Louvre Museum.

the best answer to this, on behalf of the Church, by drawing on the same musical sources, or by composing chants of equally simple structure.

Soon after this St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, who had been exiled in Phrygia where he had heard hymns like these, attempted upon his return to induce his compatriots to adopt this new style, but without success. St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (397), took up the idea and carried it out in a way that made it more accessible to the rank and file of the faithful. This time his success was so great that the name Ambrosian is still applied to a whole category of hymns which are not of his composition, and which are even versified according to principles which differ from his own.1

#### Gregorian chant

These innovations had hardly begun to bear fruit when one of the most terrible catastrophes in history overwhelmed the Western World. From the year 407, and during the next four centuries, the barbarian invasions were to sweep away almost all that Greece and Rome had bequeathed to us of their culture in every sphere -except

The reason for this is that in a world turned upside down, where temporal kingdoms were tottering, the Catholic Church remained the only authority that was still more or less stable, and the only element of continuity. And this Church already had its own music which was possessed of intense vitality inasmuch as it combined all that remained of the old Greek music with a body of song of a more modern and popular kind derived, for the most part, from those communities in Syria and Asia Minor which we have just mentioned. In any case it is a fact that the period of the great invasions coincided with a rich flowering of music, and especially with the earliest organization of sacred song in its purest form-the Gregorian chant, so called because its creation was for a long time attributed to Pope Gregory 1. (540-604). Today the tendency is to assign to him a more modest role; his name was to be used after his death to confer authority on reforms initiated by him but put into effect long after his pontificat.





The diversity of the liturgical repertoire, its growing richness and the variety of ways in which it could be interpreted by singers of all nationalities and various degrees of culture represented a real danger of disorder, and even anarchy. Complaints were uttered on all sides against the disparity of the local liturgies, the excessive complexity of certain melodies and the sensual character of certain voices which sounded too seductive. There was much to be done in the way of unification and purification, a serious task of which St. Gregory was probably the initiator. To begin with, the pre-existing repertory had to be revised and purged of its disturbing elements while, as regards the rest, it was necessary to decide on the best readings and arrange everything so as to build up a corpus which would include, in the order of the calendar, the anthems and responses appropriate for all the solemnities of the ecclesiastical year. In this way was established the Antiphonary of the Roman Church which is said to have been placed on the altar of St. Peter and fastened with a golden chain. According to another legend, after Milan had challenged on behalf of the Ambrosian rite the authenticity of this corpus both books, the Ambrosian and the Gregorian, were placed in the eighth century on the altar of St. Peter as if to submit them to the judgment of God, and both opened at the same time.

The principles of interpretation had still to be determined, and this led to the complete re-organization of the Roman school of singing, the Schola Cantorum, which was the training ground of missionaries who were sent out to teach the correct, official method of interpretation in all Catholic countries.

The foundations on which Gregorian plain-chant was based had been laid by theoreticians in the Middle Ages, but in order to define it briefly it will be necessary to go back to Greek music, the distant source from which it sprang, in spite of all the differences between the two systems.

The Greek musicians classified their melodic scales according to their generic nature and modal characteristics, the former determining the size of the intervals, and the latter the order in which they were disposed.

Broadly speaking, they distinguished three main kinds: the diatonic, which admitted only two sorts of interval, corresponding roughly to our tone and semi-tone; the chromatic, characterized

Crwth - player and neumatic musical notation. Book of tropes from St. Martial at Limoges. Mid-NIth century (neumes without lines). Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale. The crwth was a kind of cittern played with a bow, once common in Wales.

by the use of small, conjunct intervals, and the *enharmonic* which included intervals approximating to quartertones.

Now, at the beginning of the Christian era and under the influence of the neo-Pythagoreans, a rather mysterious sect who had elaborated, in Rome, a religious, philosophical and social system in which music was strictly regulated, the chromatic and enharmonic intervals were forbidden on the ground that they were too effeminate. All that remained, then, were the relatively simple intervals of the tone and semi-tone on which were to be based the music of the Church, and all Western music up to the beginning of the century in which we live.

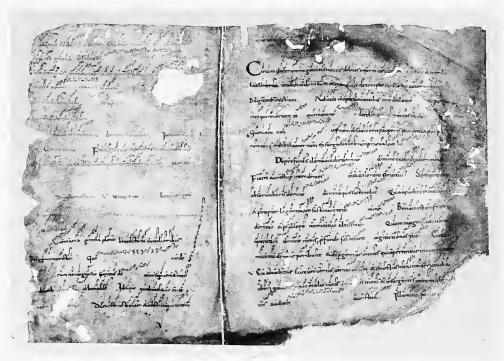
The Gregorian chant, therefore, only preserved those Greek modes which could be described as diatonic. This is not the place to speculate as to how the heritage of the Greeks was transmitted to the West. The story of how this came about is a confused one, and in the end the names for the Greek modes, Dorian, Phrygian, Aeolian, etc., were applied to the Church modes which did not correspond in any way to their ancient prototypes.<sup>2</sup>

The purest Gregorian chant is monodic, whether sung by a soloist or shared between a soloist and the choir, or sung by two choirs alternately. As regards its form, it comprises: syllabic recitatives, occasionally with groups of several notes on a single syllable; varia-

tions on the recitative, more or less ornamented and proceeding, not by diminution, i.e. by dividing each value into shorter ones, but by augmentation, i.e. by adding or inserting melodic fragments; and, lastly, ornamental vocalises such as used in Alleluias, which a little

At the time we are speaking of now, the beginning of the seventh century, the repertory of Church chants was transmitted orally.

Why, in the West, did not the early Christian church have recourse to this notation? Had it been forgotten, or did



Musical neumatic manuscript. Early 11th century. Autun Library.

later will become extremely important as the forerunner of the sequence.



this signify the deliberate abandonment of a method whose Hellenic precision rendered it unsuitable to the vaguer, less well-defined Oriental psalmodies? Another reason for the rejection of this method may have been its old association with profane musical forms, as represented in dancing, the theatre and popular songs. This point is still a controversial one, as is also the meaning to be attached to this statement, which nevertheless seems categorical, made by Isidore of Seville in the seventh century "Unless retained by the memory sounds perish, for they cannot be written down".

#### Humble beginnings of notation in the West

In the absence of a musical notation it was nevertheless possible to assist the singers' memory; and this seems to have been, at first, the modest ambition of the *neumes*.

The first neumes—from the Greek neuma which Dom Suñol, one of the most eminent specialists in Gregorian notation, translates as figure, or sign

Musicians (percussion instrument and oliphant). Drawings illustrating a XIIth century treatise. Paris, Bibliothèque Nat.



David playing the harp; musicians with bells, an oliphant, a viella and organ.

Etienne Harding's Bible. Early 12th century. Dijon Library.

made by the choirmaster to his singers—appear in liturgical manuscripts at the end of the eighth or beginning of the ninth century; (they are also found in seventh century manuscripts, but it is generally considered that these were added later). These neumes are little signs, lines, points, hooks, etc., placed above the text so as to supply the singer with a sort of very rudimentary shorthand of the music he was supposed to know already.

These neumes are generally supposed to have originated in the accents which, in Greek prosody, directed the inflections of the voice in an upward or downward direction. We can but record the fact that the neumes, from the ninth century onwards, were very soon adopted by several countries where every religious

centre of any importance modified them to suit their requirements.

All these notations have as their main characteristics two accents: the virga, a line rising obliquely from left to right parallel with the script, and the punctum, a descending line which later was reduced to a point. The first of these accents signifies that the voice must rise, the second that it must descend without, however, specifying the interval to be covered.

Soon, in order to distinguish the simple melodic figures of two, three or four notes, composite neumes were invented to which were added punctuation and interpretation signs, the meaning of which is not always clear.

Then in the tenth century progress was made which was destined to have

important consequences. Hitherto the neumes had been placed side by side more or less horizontally above the text, each sign indicating a minor inflexion without conveying any idea of the general pattern of the melody. Then certain copyists, probably Italian, had the idea of indicating the melodic intervals by relating them to an imaginary line corresponding to a pivotal note in the medium register of the melody, the lower sounds being written under and the higher sounds above this line at a distance proportionate to the interval to be covered. In this way the vocal line was represented visually and could be seen at first glance; this was, in fact, none other than the principle of diastematic notation (diastema = interval) to which our modern system of notation still conforms.

No doubt the system was far from being accurate, but we must remember that it applied to a repertory that was universally known and handed down by oral tradition — a repertory, moreover, that was fairly simple and of which some parts—the beginnings and ends of the anthems most commonly usedwere already incorporated in formulae which everyone knew by heart. Nevertheless efforts were made to find a better method of indicating the intervals, and this was done by drawing an actual line where the imaginary one had been, and then adding a second line at the interval of a fifth, and then a third and a fourth; these lines were drawn in different colours, the F being nearly always red and the C yellow.

By the end of the twelfth century a four-line stave was in use, the lines being spaced at intervals of a third, each one being marked at the beginning by a letter corresponding to the note it represented. From these letters were derived the *clefs* which made the use of coloured lines superfluous.

For a long time all these various discoveries were attributed to Gui d'Arezzo, one of the most celebrated theoreticians of the Middle Ages. He will still be famous for having reduced them to order and caused them to be widely known, and also for having probably invented solmization, a rather primitive method of solfège which nevertheless led to the elaboration of our present system.

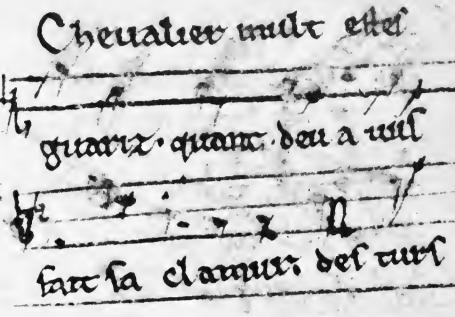
Since the seventh and eighth centuries the first six notes of the scale had been designated by letters. Gui d'Arezzo had the idea, not of replacing the letters, but of adding to each of them the first syllable of a verse from the hymn to St. John the Baptist: Ut queant laxis Resonare fibris Mira gestorum Famuli tuorum Solve polluti Labii reatum.

Each verse of this hymn was sung a tone higher than the one before, except the fourth which was separated from the third verse by a semi-tone only; this gave the singer an excellent opportunity of remembering the respective places of the tones and semi-tone in the series ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la.

This series of six notes, or hexachord, was the basis of *solmization* (derived from *sol-mi*, the top and bottom notes of the hexachord on *sol*).<sup>3</sup>

texts, and the rhythms which it has made its own are equally inappropriate both to the fourth-century hymns whose rhythms are derived from secular songs and to the canticles and prose texts of the twelfth century, which are manifestations of an art that flourished some three centuries later than the Catholic world had, at the time, satisfied an essential need. For the future it was fraught with serious dangers: for limiting liturgical chants to a *corpus* compiled and established for all time meant that it would never be possible for sacred music attuned to its period to develop; and the repertory, being

aucem eccla quia superni su minis spiendobe protegicus, quasi cuncta cemporalia despicir sunam sub pedibies premitis sur sum sole percusso de signaturi sicum sole percusso de signaturi sicum over sole arueve sus sur suma over sole arueve sur suma momento uventa supernovali momento uventa. Sup uentente percusso sur successiva supernovali momento uventa. Sup uentente percussori sur successiva supernovali.



The oldest French song, written between Easter and Christmas 1144 (neumes on lines). Erfurt Library.

We have still to consider the rhythmic aspect of Gregorian chant, but here we are on shifting ground. There are several different schools of thought, reconcilable perhaps, provided a not too wide field of application is given to the rules laid down by the Benedictines of Solesmes for the performance of the plain-chant, cantus planus, "a unified chant with equal note values", which is specifically Gregorian. Its recitatives and chants are composed on prose

golden age of true Gregorian chant (fifth to eighth centuries).

#### Charlemagne establishes Gregorian chant

St. Gregory's achievement in codifying Roman ecclesiastical chant and imposing its adoption throughout the

thus condemned never to progress, was in grave danger of becoming atrophied and corrupt.

Charlemagne intervened in time to breathe new life into it. In his profound political wisdom he saw clearly what religion, and especially religious music, could do to weld together the mosaic of peoples of which his empire consisted. Aided by his Minister Alcuin, and not hesitating to use drastic measures when necessary, he exerted all his authority to impose the use of Gregorian chant.

One of the most tangible results of his intervention was the great increase in the teaching of music in the monasteries, not only on the practical, but on the theoretical side-theory being the only branch which could lay claim to the title of musica. In verses which have often been quoted, Gui d'Arezzo has stressed the superiority of the musicus, composer or theoretician, over the cantor who was the executant (singer or performer on an instrument), and he concludes: "Nam qui facit quod non sapit definitur bestia." [For he who does what he does not know (i.e. of which he does not know the theory) is, by definition, a beast.]

The part played by Alcuin in spreading a knowledge of music was considerable. Coming from York, where he had

The Old Men of the Apocalypse holding rebecs. Church at Moissac (Tarn-et-Garonne). Spandrel of South door. circ. 1130.



been a pupil of the best English masters, he taught mainly at St. Martin in Tours (from 796 to 804, with some interruptions) and made this the most important French school of that time.

Nor was secular music neglected. One of the treatises attributed to Hucbald (Commemoratio brevis, etc.) describes "the zither and flute players and singers of popular songs who study with enthusiasm everything that is commonly sung or played for the delectation of their hearers." It is said that the emperor Charlemagne sometimes listened during meals to such music, which alternated with the reading of historical tales. It was at this period that it became customary to compose music on Latin texts dealing with important contemporary events; one of the earliest of these compositions which has been preserved is, incidentally, the Planctus Caroli, a funereal lament for the death of the Emperor of the Western world.

Charlemagne, it is worth noting, had also taken trouble to preserve poems in the Frankish language recording the exploits of ancient warriors, thus maintaining a sort of popular lyrical tradition from which, three centuries later, would emerge the chansons de geste.

The collapse of the empire which followed on his death did not have such a bad effect on the development of the art of music as might have been feared. Although for half a century the name of no creative musician emerges, progress continued to be made in the theory and practice of the art. The 'neumatic' notation which, as we have seen, was gaining in precision (not without anticipating to some extent future events), offered new facilities for the expression of musical thought. But it was the latter especially that was now to be enriched by two innovations of considerable importance, one concerning the emhellishment of melody through the sequence and the trope, and the other introducing the possibility of singing two or more melodies simultaneously: in other words, polyphony.

#### Sequences and tropes: origins of liturgical drama

The sequence and the trope supplied the antidote, as it were, to the paralysis that was threatening the ecclesiastical chant as a result of the Gregorian reforms. By stabilizing the repertory and limiting it strictly, St. Gregory had done what was most essential, as it had become necessary to check a state of anarchic liberty which threatened disaster; at the same time the measures he had imposed to keep the repertory unchanged would, in the long run,

have proved equally harmful. An expedient hit upon by chance enabled musicians to reconcile respect for the texts of the Antiphonary with the need for rejuvenation, without which all forms of art become atrophied and perish.

As was customary in the Eastern churches, the practice had been adopted of adding to certain pieces, especially to the Alleluia, a prolongation (sequentia) by embellishing the last syllable with a long vocalise of jubilation. So as to retain more easily the melodic pattern of this jubilus, the monks of the Abbey of Jumièges had the idea of placing a syllabic text (a syllable for each note) beneath the melody. When Jumièges was burnt by the Normans, one of the monks who had fled sought refuge in Switzerland, in the monastery at Saint-Gall. There his colleague Notker the Stammerer (Notker Balbulus) adopted this procedure with enthusiasm and developed it to such a pitch that its paternity has often been attributed to him. After his death in 912, others at Saint-Gall and elsewhere continued on these lines. In the meantime, the Oriental-sounding vocalise had been transformed into a symmetrical chant and put into verse; this was the sequence, or prose (the latter term springs perhaps from a confusion; the abbreviation pro sa, pro sequentia, may have been read as prosa.)

The trope was similar in essentials, but instead of being a pendant to a liturgical chant, it was incorporated therein. Between two words in a sacred text it was the custom to add either laudative epithets, or an actual commentary.

In the epistles these additions were sometimes in the vulgar tongue so that the faithful could follow them more easily. These epistles were called 'farcies'.4 The tropes, like the sequences, soon became very numerous and gave rise to innumerable varieties. Through them, secular rhythms, and even themes, came to take their place beside the Gregorian chant. It had now become the custom to set certain tropes in dialogue form, and even to heighten the expressiveness by what amounted to an actual mise en scène. The following, for example, is the procedure recommended by St. Ethelwold about the year 970, to the Bencdictines of Winchester when performing the trope with which Tuotilo introduced the Paschal Introit Resurrexi; he claimed to have borrowed the idea from a French church at Floury in the valley of the Loire:

"When the third lesson is being sung, let one of the monks approach the sepulchre and sit down there quietly, holding a palm in his hand. During the singing of the third response three other monks enter and, walking eircums-

pectly, as if they were seeking something, go towards the sepulchre. This is done in imitation of the angel seated by the sepulchre and the women who came with precious balm to anoint the body of Jesus. When the seated monk perceives the others approaching, he must begin to sing quietly and sotto voce: Quem quaeritis (Whom do ye seek?). And when he has finished singing, the other three respond in unison: Ihesu Nazarenum (Jesus of Nazareth)."

This rudimentary action was nothing more nor less than the beginning of the liturgical drama which was soon to come into its own and develop in the most fruitful manner. What were its themes? The mysteries of the Nativity (the Christmas *Hodie cantandus*) and Resurrection, the lives of the Saints and the miracles they performed.

miracles they performed.

The theatre, which originally had

been merely a faithful and simple illustration of the liturgy, lost no time in extending its scope and incorporating, if necessary, elements of a secular nature.

Manuscripts from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries have preserved for us both the text and music of numerous pieces in which, following Combarieu, it is possible to see the germ of several dramatic genres: symbolic drama (The Wise and Foolish Virgins), melodrama showing the kidnapping and eventual restoration of a child (The Son of Gedron), spectacular drama (Daniel), fairy-plays (The Miracles of St. Nicholas), lyrical comedy (The Stolen Jew).

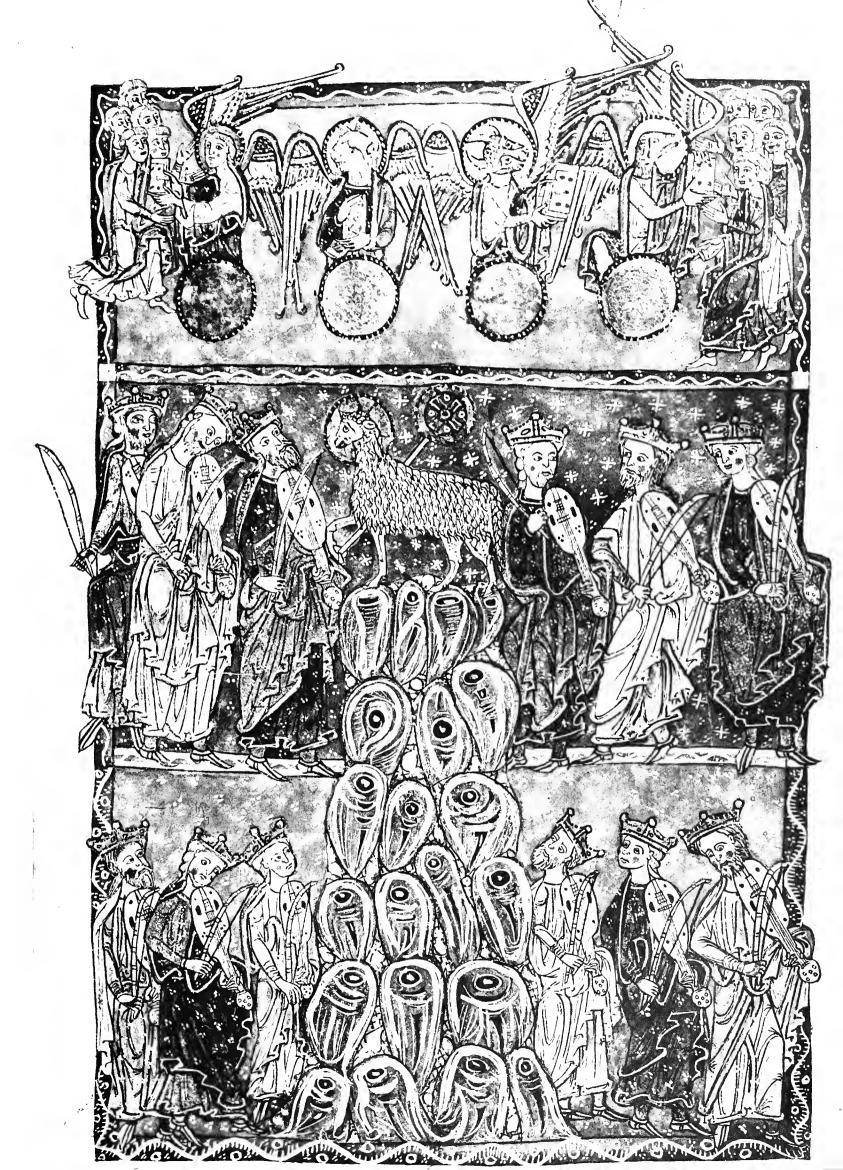
These plays were originally acted inside the church itself, often with a profusion of accessories, and even scenery. Later on they took place on the open space outside the church.

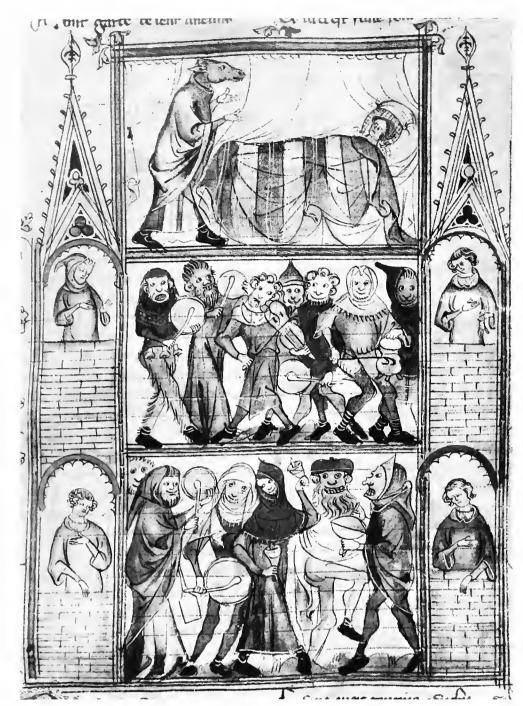
The Mysteries, as they were called, eventually became a composite kind of entertainment, combining sacred and profane elements, with a spoken text, solo singers, a chorus, dances and processions. As they have been adequately studied and described in histories of literature, we would refer the reader desirous of fuller information to these sources.

#### The beginning of polyphony

During the finest period of Gregorian monody (ninth century) a very different kind of musical technique began to make its appearance known as polyphony. That this was the very first time such a thing had ever been attempted is now no longer believed, especially since

The Old men surround the Lamb (rebecs and hurdy-gurdies). Miniatures from L'Apocalypse de Jean Audrez. 13th century. Paris. Bibliothèque Nationale.





Le Charivari. Miniature from the Roman de Fauvel. 14th cent. Paris, B.N. This comic orchestra includes animals and humans mostly playing classical instruments—drums, hurdy-gurdy, bells and cymbals; one of them is striking a cooking-pot.

the ethnologists have discovered signs of its existence among very primitive peoples; and it is by no means certain that only monody was known to the ancient world.

It is probable that during the first centuries of our era some more or less rudimentary experiments with polyphony were attempted. This seems almost certain as early as the seventh century, but it was not until the ninth century that the theory of this new technique was expounded in several chapters of the famous *Musica enchiriadis* which was at one time attributed to Huchald, wrongly, as it would seem, although it is almost certainly the work of one of his contemporaries. He mentions specifically a two-voice poly-

phony, the organum, which in its simplest form consists of parallel fifths. The principal liturgical theme, from which the composition stems (it was called vox principalis at first and later cantus firmus, or tenor) is accompanied a fifth below by the duplum or vox organalis:



Male and female mountebanks. Miniatures from the Roman d'Alexandre. 13th century. Paris, B.N. Opposite can be seen a harp half emerging from its sheath. On the page facing, from top to bottom, women playing the bagpipes, hurdygurdy, portative organ, psaltery and rebec.

Other kinds, more evolved, move obliquely, admit fourths and the passing use of thirds.

It is no longer thought that the word organum is derived from the instrument, the organ. But it must be pointed out that mediaeval organs were made to play these same series of parallel notes after the manner of the composite mutation stops on a modern organ. Each lever (corresponding to our keys) controlled not just a single note, but several spaced out in fifths and octaves. In the great organ at Winchester, built about the year 950 (which, according to the monk Wulstan who died in 963, had 400 pipes and 26 bellows worked by 70 men and needed two organists to play it, each seated at keyboard of twenty levers) a single lever controlled ten pipes playing fifths and octaves doubled and superposed.

This was an exceptionally powerful and barbarous instrument, but some must have survived as two centuries later, after considerable progress had been made in the meantime, we find Ailred, Abbot of Rievaulx in Yorkshire, fulminating against the abuse of instruments in churches, especially organs:

"Why, I pray you, this terrible blowing which evokes the noise of thunder rather than the sweetness of the human voice!"

In ninth and tenth century organum the interval of the third, considered to be dissonant, was only tolerated as a transition. It was only in England that, from an early date, the third was not only admitted but made the basis of a harmonic system known as gymel (cantus gemellus) which consisted in doubling the principal theme a third above. As it became more flexible, this procedure, towards the end of the thirteenth century, gave rise to works such as the following, Edi Beo (Happy be thou) dating from about 1280 which I reproduce here both on account of its freshness and because it shows the definitely 'modern' tonal characteristics which at that time were frequently to be found in musical forms influenced by popular song.

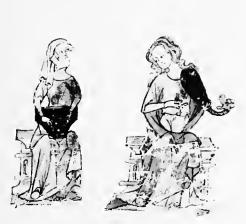
(See musical example on facing page.) ▶











It has been suggested that the gymel may perhaps have been the origin of another sort of harmonization, the faux-bourdon, characterized by the predominance of sequences of parallel sixths.

and consequently lacking in precision, shows a remarkable relaxation of the rules of organum in which contrary movement was already tolerated.<sup>5</sup> By the end of the eleventh century the theoretician John Cotton had already written



"Sumer is icumen in". Canon in square-note Roman notation. 13th or 14th cent.

The English origin of the faux-bourdon is sometimes disputed today, although there is no doubt that musical culture was widely spread in the British Isles from a very early date. Soon after the evangelization of the country by St. Augustine of Kent at the beginning of the seventh century, music was taught at Canterbury, Malmesbury, York, etc. In the ninth century Johannes Scotus Erigena, the Irish philosopher, dealt with it briefly in his De Divisione Naturae, and by this time Ireland, Wales and Scotland already had instrumentalists and singers whose fame spread quickly to the continent. Irish monks founded the monastery of St. Gall. Early in the eleventh century the Winchester collection of tropes, although written in neumatic notation

a work which for a long time was considered authoritative. In the thirteenth century two still more important figures make their appearance: Jean de Garlande, a graduate of Oxford, who opened a school in Paris about the year 1212 in the Rue de Garlande (later to become Rue Gallande)—whence the pseudonym by which he is known to history—and Walter Odington whose De speculatione musices throws some particularly interesting light on mediaeval rhythms.

By the eleventh century a freer form of organum, also known as descant, succeeded the old note-for-note organum (point against point; hence the term 'counterpoint' in use since about the year 1300 to designate, incorrectly, a whole method of composition based



on the simultaneous evolution of several melodic lines).6

It was in France that the art of counterpoint made a most brilliant start; manuscripts belonging to the Abbey of St. Martial at Limoges include a valuable collection of pieces written between the last years of the eleventh century and the middle of the twelfth from which it can be seen how rapidly it was being enriched. But the first definite results were achieved by the Ecole de Notre Dame in Paris during the second half of the twelfth century. The position of the Masters of this School is probably without a parallel in the history of music. We possess their monumental works, and there is evidence of the high esteem in which they were held by their contemporaries; but of their careers, their identity even, we know nothing apart from their names, Léonin and Pérotin, which are probably merely familiar distortions of their Christian names; while as to the epithet of "excellent organist", it is impossible to know whether the allusion here is to organ playing, or to the composition of organa, since there is no specific mention of an organ at Notre Dame before the fourteenth century —and that was only a little instrument used for teaching purposes in the choir school.

For a long time we were obliged to take the greatness of Léonin and Pérotin, as it were, on trust; we admired them on the strength of ancient documents, and it was only at the end of the last century that copies of the compositions forming the Magnus liber organi de graduali et antiphonario of the School of Notre-Dame were discovered in various foreign libraries. A certain number of pieces by Pérotin have been identified with certainty, while those of Léonin are a matter for conjecture. Above all, Pérotin's organum gives such an impression of rhythmic unity and strength that one can very well imagine it associated today with some solemn rite in a cathedral possessing the same characteristics as itself-namely sturdiness, loftiness and a challenge to the laws of gravity.

In addition to organa Pérotin also wrote in the form, which was new at the time, of the polyphonic conductus. This was the name originally given to monodies which accompanied the comings and goings of the actors in the earliest liturgical plays (e.g. Daniel, circ. 1140); later the term was used to designate the chants which preceded a reading or which introduced the Benedicamus domino at the end of divine service.

While Pérotin and his school were bringing the organum and the conductus to the highest degree of perfection, another form was beginning to make its appearance—a form which was to have

a predominant place in polyphonic music for the next two centuries, bringing important consequences in its train: the *motet*.

It was not long before this name came to be applied to almost any elaborate form of polyphonic vocal music; but originally the motet was simply an accompanying part superimposed over the liturgical theme (tenor) but having its own text which was different to that sung by the tenor—hence the name motet (in French, petit mot, or petit poème).

For the motet, on becoming a recognized musical form, was soon enriched by a third, and sometimes a fourth voice, combined after the fashion of the day which was becoming increasingly complex. The added parts were written above the tenor (long notes) in shorter notes each part having its own rhythm. The upper part, the equivalent of the dessus or superius in the Renaissance vocal quartet, was generally the most highly ornamented. Incidentally, it would seem that, as regards singing, the quartet was considered as early as the thirteenth century the ideal combination.

In a motet for three or four voices each has its own text, which was generally a commentary on or paraphrase of the idea expressed in the tenor (or canto fermo). For example, over the tenor line "In Bethleem" the duplum sings: "In Bethleem Herodes iratus", and the triplum: "Chorus innocentium sub Herodis stancium Feritate nato rege gloriae". This practice continued throughout the first half of the thirteenth century. But under the influence of a secular art which had developed considerably, as will be seen a little later, the emancipation of the motet soon came about in a curious way. The upper voices were given a text in the vernacular to sing, while the tenor remained, for some time to come faithful to its liturgical origin. Very soon, however, this led to a freedom bordering on anarchy. Composers took pleasure in multiplying contrasts and conflicting elements, no longer only in language and rhythm, but in the general spirit of the texts which were destined to be sung together. For example, over a canto fermo of a religious nature three texts in French may be superimposed: a moral maxim, a love song and a drinking song. The distance between this and the secular motet from which Latin is completely excluded, and which in consequence will not shrink from impropricties, will soon he covered.

Nevertheless, the motet is not a popular genre. Its complexity marks it as intended for a cultured élite. About the year 1300 a celebrated theoretician, Jean de Grouchy (Johannes de Grocheo) says: "This chant is not intended for the vulgar who do not understand

its finer points and derive no pleasure from hearing it; it is meant for educated people and those who look for refinement in art. It is at festivities organized by such as these that motets are generally sung, just as cantilenas and rondels find their place among the amusements of the common people." In his *Theoria* he defines a series of vocal and instrumental varieties of secular music (musica civilis) which at that time had reached a particularly interesting point in its history and which it is now time to consider.

#### Development of secular music

As to the nature and conditions of existence of this secular music, up to the eleventh century we have, as I have already said, no precise information. As proof of its vitality we must rely on the evidence provided by the reactions it provoked, generally unfavourable on the part of the Fathers of the Church. And yet in the seventh century we find St. Isidore of Seville, under the heading Musica organica, making a study of wind instruments, trumpets, flutes, organ, etc., and under another heading, Musica rythmica examining stringed and percussion instruments, although we know that the Church in those days did not readily tolerate them, while some of these instruments were clearly destined for the amusement of laymen.

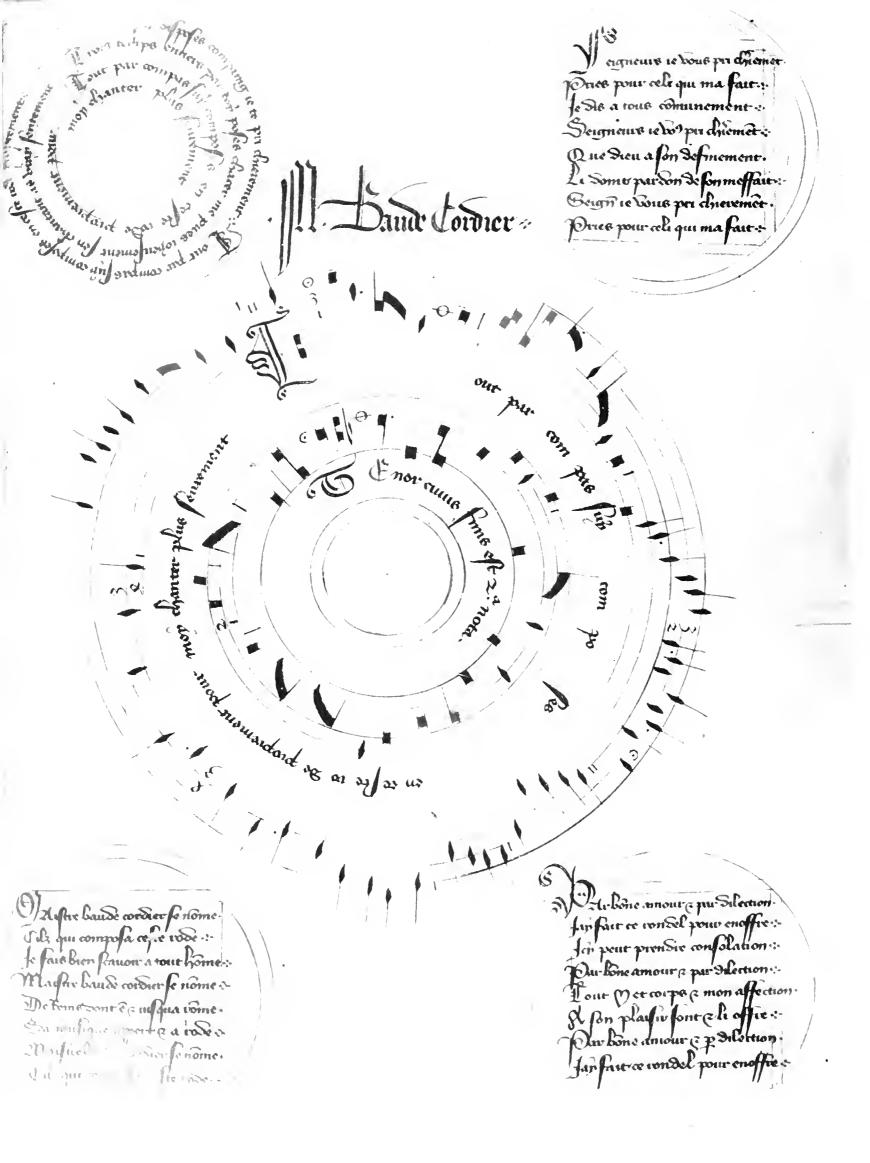
Further proof of the extent to which musica civilis was expanding is to be found in the fact that everything within a certain sphere of sacred music—the early hymns to begin with, and later on the Ambrosians and later still the sequences and the tropes—all show the influence of the simplified rhythms which were certainly derived from secular music. On the other hand, popular song often borrowed from plainsong and its modes.<sup>8</sup>

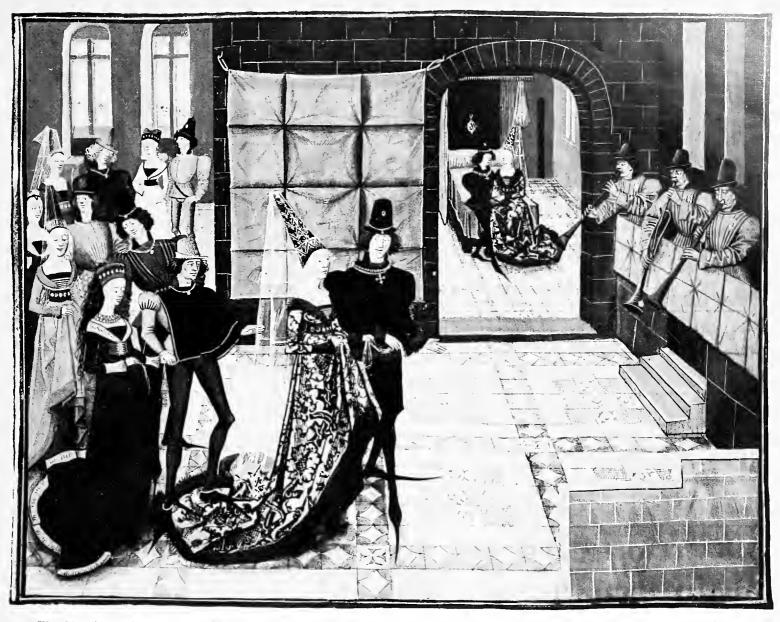
It was towards the end of the eleventh century that secular music began definitely to extend its sway in the West. Its rapid rise was due to various causes, one of the most important of which was the development, in the time of Charlemagne, of a corpus of Latin literature, of a lyrical character, the extreme importance of which is now beginning to be recognized. First of all there was a whole repertoire of secular or semi-secular song, the versus of which the Abbey of St. Martial in Limoges had assembled a fine collection; there were also, as we have already

The musicians Guillaume Dufay and ► Gilles Binchois. (Portative organ and harp). Miniature from the Champion des Dames by Martin Lefranc. 15th cent.

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale.

maytre Gutted Ma pas long teps le bien fateret
Quelz elkalingent tout Davis





The Marriage of Renaud de Montauban with the daughter of King Yvon of Gascony. 15th cent. Paris, Arsenal Library.

noted, the sequences and the tropes which combine the sacred and the profane. Another influence that has been suggested is that of the songs sung all over Europe by the itinerant monks and clerks known as the Goliards who were, however, more or less discredited through their association with the jongleurs and generally in revolt against the Church, which treated them severely. Finally, it appears that some scholars often tried their hand at setting to music the Latin poets, either classics, such as Horace and Virgil, or authors who were more or less modern at the time, such as Cassiodorus and Boethius.

In the vernacular there were the *Chansons de geste*, interminable poems of 5,000 or 10,000 verses and more in which music played a part of which we

◄ Circular canon, by Baude Cordier. 15th cent. Chantilly, Musée Condé. (Two voices accompanied by a third 'free' voice.) Musicians throughout the centuries until Bach and later have always been seeking new and ingenious forms of canon.

know very little. It is thought that all the verses of each laisse, or strophe, of which there might have been as many as 50, were sung to the same theme, like the litanies, except the last which served as a kind of final cadence. The singers most probably accompanied their song with a few notes on the harp or hurdy-gurdy (vielle); or a few strokes on the tabor. They may also have re-kindled the attention of their audience by little instrumental interludes: mediaeval iconography strongly supports this hypothesis. 9 The Chansons de geste were usually disseminated throughout the land by the jongleurs, remote descendants of the mountebanks, or buffoons, who belonged to the period of Roman decadence; they were a motley crowd of individuals of all races and classes of society-renegades from the Church (Goliards) and ignorant folk-revealing a medley of influences, some French or Breton, others emanating from England and the Scandinavian countries (the harp, their characteristic instrument, which had

somehow reached the West from ancient Egypt, by what route it is not known, appears in Ireland, Scotland and Wales before any trace of it is found on the Continent).

#### From the troubadours to the singers of laude

There came a time at the end of the twelfth century when these minstrels were called upon to play a more important part and, as it turned out, one that was to become much more widely known than the peddling of chansons de geste. For it was they above all who were instrumental in making known the art of the Tronbadours, or Trouvères, a magnificent burgeoning of music and poetry inspired by the intensification of the chivalrous spirit born of the Crusade and of all the attendant warlike emotions, sentimental passions, displacements and discoveries of all



Fra Angelico: Christ in Glory, Circa 1430, Wood, London, National Gallery. The celestial concert depicts most of the instruments in use when the picture was painted: tabors, portative organs, harp, trumpets, rebecs, psaltery, hurdy-gurdies and lutes.

kinds amongst which some scholars attribute the greatest importance to the revelation of an Arabian lyric art, enlarged and enriched through the contacts linking the conth-west promess of france with the Moorish-can civilization.

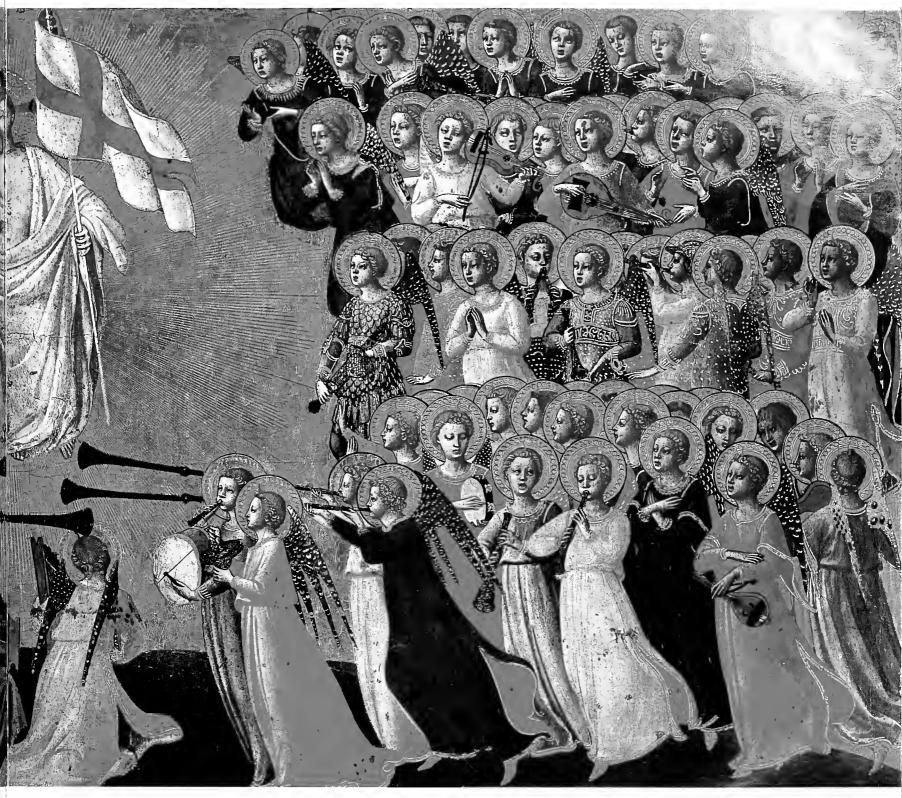
radle of the Troubadours cade of the Troubadours once but Aquitania which growing of Limoges of activity was to of St. Martial.

The first Troubadour whose name is known to historians was a very exalted personage, Guillaume 1X, Duke of Aquitania, who lived from 1071 to 1127.

A chronicler who was almost a contemporary, Orderic Vidal, depicts him as a man of action, valiant, of jovial disposition, a great spinner of yarns, "much addicted to jesting and surpassing in his innumerable pranks the greatest clowns". The heroines of his poems are treated in much the same way as those in Boccaccio's Tales.

Only rarely does he leave his ribaldry on one side and give himself up to pure and tender sentiment; and when that happens some inspired verse may provide a foretaste of the more profound and liner art of a Jaufré Rudel, a Marcabru, a Gancelm Faidit, a Raimband d'Orange, a Guirant Riquier or a Bernard de Ventadour, the greatest master of them all.

The movement initiated by the Troubadours had spread in less than half a century to north of the Loire, under



divers influences, of which the most powerful was undoubtedly the marriage in 1137 of Louis VII to Eleanor of Aquitania, grand-daughter of Guillaume 1X. Devoted to poetry and music, she communicated her enthusiasm and her tastes to her entourage beginning with her own daughters, Marie de Champagne and Aelis de Blois; and there is no doubt that they were largely responsible for the increased refinement, in contrast to the coarseness of Duke Guillaume, so noticeable in the songs of Blondel de Nesles, Richard Cœur de Lion, Huon d'Oisy, Conon de Béthune, the chatelain de Coucy, Thibaut de

Champagne, Grace Brulé and Adam de la Halle. The latter wrote some fine monodies as well as rondels and motets for several voices. But he owes his reputation above all to a dramatic work with incidental music which is held by some to be the first French opéra-comique. In fact, Le Jeu de Robin et Marion is a pastoral, and it is not at all certain that all the airs, which are very simple and unaecompanied, are quotations from court songs already familiar to the aristocratic public for whom the piece was intended—namely, Charles of Anjou and his court before whom it was performed, at Naples or

Palermo, about the year 1280. The names listed above show clearly that the art of the Troubadours was, at any rate in the first place, essentially aristocratic. They include very few 'commoners' (although the particle is not infallible in this respect, the mother of Bernard de Ventadour was a servant in a château in the Corrèze). But as time went on the primitive hierarchy was obliterated, not because their poetry deteriorated in any way, but because the bourgeois tried to emulate them and rose to their level. The jongleurs, especially, who were the regular interpreters of their aristocratic masters'



The Muses, miniature from an illuminated manuscript of the Champion des Dames by Martin le Franc. 1441-1442. Grenoble Library. In the foreground, a woman playing the pipe and tabor; another playing the treble shawm and dulcimer; in the background a portative organ, a different type of dulcimer, a tenor shawm, a mandola played with a plectrum, and a "flûte à bec".

works, play an increasingly important part, either as 'arrangers' or as creators; a case in point is that of one Colin Muset who wrote his own songs, and thus earned enough to set up house and found a family.

A great many of the songs of the Troubadours and Trouvères have been preserved. The repertory of the Troubadours, classified according to subject, includes the following: the sirventes, on . a political or moral theme, nearly always topical: the planh (plainte), a funereal lament; the albe (aube) describing the separation of lovers at dawn; the enueg (ennui), a violent attack on the misfortunes of life; and, finally, the debates in the form of a dialogue which, in the tenso, deal mainly with politics or morality, and in the joc partit with love—often marred by an excess of casuistry which soon becomes boring. In the Trouvères' repertory the corresponding forms are the tenson and the jeu-parti. To these should be added the chansons de toile (spinning songs) depicting a fair lady at her spinning-wheel, the pastourelles, and the pious songs of which there are a great many in the thirteenth century when the cult of the Virgin was beginning to spread.

The music of all these songs had been noted down, in a notation which has faithfully recorded the melodies, but without any indications as to rhythm; this is explained by the fact that this repertory was transmitted orally so that all the singers needed was something to assist their memory. The result is that, for us, the interpretation of these songs, as regards rhythm, is a controversial question, although the most commonly accepted theory is the one based on the metre in which the poems are written, each song being composed

according to a rhythmic mode corresponding to one of the classic Latin poetic metres. The theoreticians have reduced them to four main categories: the litany, in which all the verses are sung to the same melody (as in the chansons de geste); the hymn, where the strophe consists of a continuous melody, without repeats or symmetrical repetitions; the sequence, where there is a different melody for every two verses (AA,BB,CC etc.) and which is most probably the origin of the instrumental lai and estampie; and lastly the rondeau, a song with a refrain, comprising the virelai and the ballade.

The art of the Tronbadours (rather

Psalter of King René II of Lorraine. I5th cent. Paris, Arsenal Library. The instruments shown here are a trumpet, viol and tabor, dulcimer, shalm (a kind of medieval oboe) and portative organ.





Page of a 13th cent. antiphonary (Antiphonarium Mediceum). Florence, Laurentian Library. Gregorian notation.

than that of the Trouvères) gave rise in due course to a similar movement in Germany, which began about the time of the marriage of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa to the Princess Beatrice of Burgundy in 1156. The Minnesinger, or Minnesänger (from Minne, love, and singen, to sing) at first were content to translate and adapt the works of their French models. They were not long, however, in finding their own style, less flexible and less brilliant perhaps, but better constructed. Their poems, often of religious inspiration, were set to melodies which still preserved the old ecclesiastical modes; nevertheless, the modern "major" occurs sometimes, especially in songs for dancing like those, so fresh and spontaneous, of Neithart von Recenthal. After Neithart, the most celebrated Minnesinger were Walther

von der Vogelweide (d. circ. 1230), Witzlav von Rügen, Wolfram von Eschenbach whose epic pocms *Parzival* and *Titurel* are known to have inspired Wagner.

The last of their successors had died out by the beginning of the fourteenth century. The tradition was revived, however, and prolonged, with some notable modifications, in the fiftcenth and sixteenth centuries by the 'Mastersingers'. This was a time when the bourgeois class was very much on the up-grade, and it was to this class that most of the poets and musicians of the day belonged. The big towns, with Mainz at their head, set up schools of singing and regular corporations of

Matteo de' Pasti (?): Angel musicians. Marble. c. 1460. Rimini, Malatesta temple.

singers with very strict rules and regulations which Wagner held up to ridicule in the person of Beckmesser, whose portrait is scarcely a caricature. Their hierarchy distinguished five degrees: Schüler (pupil), Schulfreund (the school's friend), Singer, Dichter (poet), Meister (Master); the first is one who can scarcely read music, the second, one who can, the third, one who can sing several airs, the fourth, one who can invent words to fit a given tune, and the fifth, one who has composed an air. The most successful melodies were used over and over again with different words; their timbres, which were called tones, were given poetical or fantastic names such as: blue tone, black as ink, rose tone, warbler tone, sad-roll-of-bread tone, etc... These melodies were generally slow and uniform in rhythm, but too often overladen with ornamentation (Blumen, or flourishes) which obscured their outline. Among the most inspired Meistersinger may be numbered Hans Sachs, Conrad Nachtigall, Adam Puschmann. But these were men of the sixteenth century, and in their day, in a Europe where vocal polyphony reigned supreme, monody was a thing of the past. The influence of the Troubadours and Trouvères was not confined to France and the Germanic countries. It spread to Spain where it mingled perhaps with Arabic influence (a hypothesis which is being increasingly contested) in such things as the Cantigas of the thirteenth century which were monodies mostly composed in honour of the Virgin Mary. Most of them are in the form of the virelai, a derivative of the Rondel, itself complex in structure. The same form appears, but much less frequently, in the Italian laude of the thirteenth century, which present certain features





Hans Memling: Concert of Angels. Circa 1490. Antwerp, Beaux-Arts. (Psaltery, "trompette marine", lute, tenor trumpet and shawm.)

which are identical with those found in the Troubadours' songs. These laude, which originated in the entourage of St. Francis of Assisi, are the oldest pieces of religious inspiration written in Italy in the vernacular. They were intended for the use of pious folk, laymen and artisans for the most part, who would meet in the evenings in church to sing the praises of the Virgin, the Almighty and the saints, or perhaps canticles of penitence or lamentation. As time went on the structure of these laude underwent considerable changes until, about the year 1500, they emerged as polyphonic compositions in which one voice is accompanied in vertical chords by three other voices or instruments after the fashion of the frottole and strambotti which we shall come to later.

#### Notation and instruments

In order not to have to revert to the history of monody, we have advanced it considerably beyond the period at which we paused to examine the question of polyphony. Before resuming

this, it may be useful to give some account of methods of notation and of the instruments used.

The improvements brought about in notation by the use of neumes and the

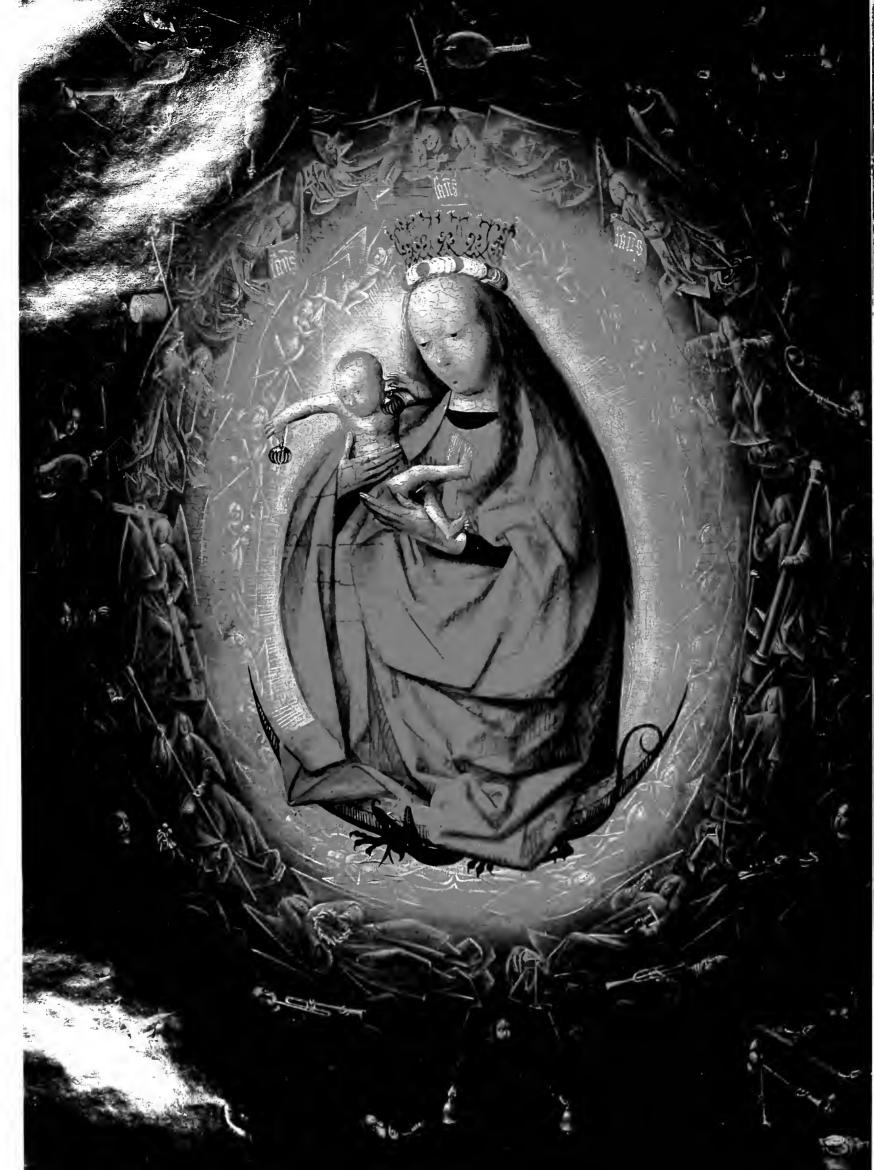


Josquin des Prez. Anonymous engraving.

adoption of the stave resulted in a considerably simplified method of writing music. During the twelfth century the neumes written on lines had assumed, in many places where music was copied, the square shape they have since retained in the liturgical books of the Roman Catholic Church.

This sign-language, where rhythm was not indicated, was quite sufficient in the early days of polyphony when two voices at the most moved 'note against note', or when one of them (the tenor) remained stationary on a long held note throughout each melodic period of the organum voice. When composers attempted to write for two or more voices moving simultaneously in different rhythms, they were obliged to think of some way of indicating graphically the duration of the notes. Many long and devious roads were explored before they evolved, towards the end of the Renaissance, a system which is substantially the same as ours today.10

As regards the playing of instruments, this was entrusted mainly to the jongleurs. The mediaeval fabliaux (tales told in verse) and chansons de geste depict for us, it is true, noble ladies accompanying themselves on the harp, lute or other 'low' instruments ('instruments bas'); this was the epithet to describe



soft-sounding instruments which, especially in France, were much in favour among people with refined taste until the advent, in the seventeenth century, of the violin; 'high' instruments were those with a loud tone ('qui faisaient grand noise') which were generally played in the open air); but the same literary source, supported by all the iconography of the old illuminated manuscripts, show clearly that purely instrumental music was almost exclusively in the hands of the jongleurs.

At the beginning of the twelfth century they had at their disposal an impressive number of instruments. Already in the early Middle Ages there were a great many which Cassiodorus, Isidore de Seville and others have classified under three headings: string, wind and percussion (tensibilia, inflatilia and percussionalia). In the books of chivalry many more are listed in increasing numbers. In Erec, by Chrétien de Troyes written about 1150 we read:

Li uns conte, li autre chante, Li uns siffle, li autre note Cil sert de harpe, cil de rote. Cil de gigue, cil de vièle, Cil flaute, cil chalumèle(...) Sonent timbre, sonent tabor, Muses, estives et fretels Et buisines et chalumel

Such a list is by no means exhaustive. Taking into account lutes, psalteries, drums and other instruments imported from the East at the time of the Crusades, it could be three times as large, and we must not forget that the organ had already been in existence for some time "the king of all instruments" as Guillaume de Machault described it later. Its use was not confined to the Church, and in the twelfth century already there were small portable organs that the player could hang round his neck, playing with one hand and operating the bellows with the other, as in the Roman de la Rose where:

"il meismes souffle et touche et chante avec a pleine bouche" ("he blows and plays and sings, all at the same time")

Playing an instrument became an art. Adenet le Roi, in his Cléomadès (13th century) makes fun of his predecessors who, he says, "scraped with the blade of a sword in place of a bow on the base of a shield, producing sounds that would have seemed harsh even to barbarian

■ Gérard de Saint-Jean: Glorification of the Virgin. c. 1490. Wood. Boymans Museum, Rotterdam. Most of the instruments in use at the time are represented: harps, rebecs, lutes and trumpets, and on the left, top, a bellows organ; in the centre, a hurdy-gurdy; on the right, bagpipes, a double flute and, below, a large dulcimer.

ears". (Ed. Faral). We have already seen what a high opinion Jean de Grouchy had of performers on the vièle. In the same treatise he defines three kinds of secular instrumental music: the cantus coronatus, which would appear to be the instrumental version of the conductus; the ductia and the stantipes, which are dances. The ductia, "a musical composition without words", (sonus illiteratus) "whose rhythm incites men to perform graceful movements according to the art of dancing", is divided into three or four sections, or points (puncta).

The stantipes (French: estampie) is considered to belong to a higher order. It comprises six or seven points; it is difficult enough "to demand the whole attention of the performer and the hearer, and it often keeps the minds of the rich free from evil thoughts".

All that remains of this purely instrumental music is some rather late transcriptions: some estampies of the thirteenth century, in 12/8 time, whose structure seems to anticipate the classical mould, often in a tonality resembling our modern major and minor, and a few non-choreographic pieces, in two or three parts, of the same period. The first known compositions for the organ date from the beginning of the next century.

It is only natural that the dance music of the jongleurs should have left very few traces, as this repertory, being monodic, was easy to remember. From a scrutiny of the documents in the archives which record payments made to jongleurs and minstrels at the royal courts, it appears that they usually played solo, or that performers on the flute or rebec were content with a simple accompaniment on the tambourine.

This did not preclude, however, from time to time, enormous gatherings of minstrels (some 400 in 1340 at the court of Mantua!) which proved that vast cohorts of angel-musicians such as Gaudenzio Ferrari has painted on the cupola of Saronno were not the product of pure imagination. But these were not, strictly speaking, orchestras, and the sound emitted by ensembles such as these was probably no better regulated and no more refined than that produced by the 700 fifes, oboes, trumpets and drums, and 80 canon, which in 1671 'played' at Dunkirk before Louis XIV fragments of Lully's Psyché.

#### Ars Nova and Guillaume de Machault

The progress made in the thirteenth century by the music of the Troubadours, the increased flexibility of rhythm, and the fact that instrumental dances were written down, were all signs,

among others, of an emancipation from which secular music was going to benefit most. What was in fact taking place was a kind of pre-Renaissance, in music as in other things, reflecting a restlessness and thirst for novelty which coincided with profound changes in political and social structures, the decline of the feudal system, a weakening of the temporal powers of the Church, the rise of the bourgeoisie and the rapid expansion of the Universities.

In music this movement was represented, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, by what has been called Ars Nova. These words formed the title of a treatise written in Paris about 1325 and mainly concerned with questions of rhythm. But the influence of its author, Philippe de Vitry, diplomat, composer of distinction and a writer to whom Petrarch paid homage as "the greatest and the only poet" of his time, extended far beyond problems of rhythm. It is true he had gone further in his studies on this subject than a scholar of the preceding generation, Pierre de la Croix, of Amiens, known as the "optimus notator", he had definitely accepted binary form (the only concession made to the past was that it was still called "imperfect"). He had also made available to composers a note of smaller value than the semi-breve. the minim (diamond-shaped with a tail above it ♣) which however had actually been used in the works of Pierre de la Croix. But the few motets by Philippe de Vitry that have survived show that he was an equally successful innovator in the sphere of harmony and form. 11 His researches were to bear magnificent fruit in the works of a creative genius, Guillaume de Machault, a poet and musician like Adam de la Halle and Philippe de Vitry, but of a very different calibre.

The work by which he is best known to the general public, thanks to the gramophone, is the Messe Notre-Dame often, and incorrectly, called Messe du Sacre de Charles V. This is a work of exceptional importance; it is the first, and for nearly a century, the only polyphonic Mass entirely conceived by a single composer, but this chronological distinction is of little importance in comparison with the intrinsic musical value of the work, which is an astonishing synthesis of traditionalism at its hest combined with a modernism of almost reckless audacity. The influence of Ars Nova can be seen in the capricious rhythms, use of syncopation, hoquet (a technical device already used in the twelfth century in France and England whereby a melody is divided between two or three voices in very short fragments, sometimes of only a note or two, each fragment being sung by one of the voices while the others are silent). Much use is also made of imitation

—a procedure employed before Machaut, but in a much less coherent fashion, whereby a melodic phrase is distributed among the different voices in a polyphonic composition. Sometimes a whole theme, or motif, is repeated, unaltered, in different parts of the same Mass, thus anticipating, it would seem, the 'cyclic' system adopted by César Franck and his followers. Finally, there are times when his counterpoint becomes immobilized, creating an impression of vertical harmony, of "chords imagined as such".

But this Mass is only part of an important corpus of works which include a quantity of secular vocal music of which there are in existence some 150 ballads, virelays, rondels, lays, and motets (there are only five motets with sacred words). These are no less original than the Messe Notre-Dame, and reveal the same combination of innovations and old technical processes brought up to date. From the creative point of view the most important are the 42 ballades notées. These differ from the polyphonic motets in that they no longer have a fixed cantus fermus; a single voice, sometimes a vocal duet, sings over an accompaniment of from one to three instrumental parts freely invented. This is an anticipation not so much of the accompanied monody of the seventeenth century, in which the voice alone predominates, as of the great Romantic 'fied', where voice and accompaniment are equal artistic partners.

The influence of Machaut, increased by his travels and his relations with numerous royalties and their courts, contributed very largely to the expansion of Ars Nova. It was in Italy that it had the most fruitful consequences.

#### Reappearance of Italy on the scene

Since the ninth century France had exercised an indisputable hegemony over European music. In Tuscany the monodic art of the laudes had certainly produced some fine vocal music resembling in certain features that of the Troubadours, only more flexible and more highly ornamented. A polyphonic music was beginning to take shape, inspired mainly by the conductus of the French school, but manifesting a desire for greater liberty by its abandonment of the 'fixed' tenor derived from plain-chant (with the object of making this voice as 'free' as the others) and by entrusting the principal melodic part not, as before, to the lowest, but to the highest voice; and this superius was soon to be treated so freely and with so much imagination that it is possible to look upon it as

the precursor of the modern bel canto. However, no composer had as yet appeared on the scene capable of restoring to Italy the place she had occupied among the great musical countries in the early Middle Ages when the first chants of the Christian Church were beginning to take shape. This was to be the privilege of the three generations which spanned the period from 1325 to 1425. The most notable figures in the first of these were Giovanni da Cascia and Jacopo da Bologna; but the most celebrated and most popular musician of this period, Francesco Landino, belonged to the following generation. An artist of manifold gifts, poet and composer, he was also, though blind from childhood, a virtuoso on the flute, lute and organ which he was reputed to be able to tune and, if necessary, take to pieces himself "down to the last pipe". His skill as a performer on the portative organ (organetto) is legendary. His contemporary Giovanni da Prato tells how (during his lifetime, in 1389) one day when "a thousand birds" were singing in a garden Landino was asked to accompany them on the organetto to see whether their singing would be slowed down or stimulated by his playing. "At first they were almost silent in order to listen to him; afterwards they sang with greater brilliance than ever, while a nightingale settled on the branch of a tree just above his head." The 150 or so compositions of his which have been preserved show how pre-eminent he was in his day, although this was a period when good musicians were beginning to be plentiful. I refrain from mentioning all their names, preferring to give some account of the musical forms they worked in—the madrigal, the ballad and the chasse.

The first of these, the madrigal, is specifically Italian. The same word has been used to designate two different kinds of composition which flourished, one in the fourteenth century and the other in the sixteenth, having nothing in common but their name.

The fourteenth century madrigal in its subject-matter and structure, resembles the pastourelles of the Troubadours. The poem consists of two or three strophes of three verses each followed by a distich, the ritornello, which, in spite of its name, is not in the nature of a refrain, but served as a conclusion to the whole composition. The strophes were all set to the same tune, while the ritornello had another. The madrigal was generally for two or three voices, the upper one being more florid than the others. Landino wrote some quite elaborate ones, like the three-part De dinmi tu where the two lower voices sing a canon at the fifth. The canon is a method of composition for several voices in which different voices sing the same melody, but one after the other, either on the same degree of the scale, or at an interval of a second, or a third, etc.

The Italian ballade, for which Landino had a definite predilection—he wrote 141 as against only 12 madrigals—is not derived from the ballade of the French trouvères, but rather from the virelay in which all the verses of each strophe were sung to the same tune, except the last which anticipated the melody of the refrain.

The chasse (caccia) is not a specifically Italian form, but it was cultivated especially beyond the Alps. In France it was only a particular example of a descriptive, or rather imitative form of music of which the celebrated Montpellier MS contains an example dating from the thirteenth century. This is a motet for three voices describing a market scene in which the tenor voice imitates the street seller crying his wares: "Fresh strawberries! Ripe blackberries!" The French chasses of the fourteenth century are canons for two unaccompanied voices on hunting themes; but later on all sorts of subjects were included under the same title, the word chasse being used to designate any kind of composition in canon form, until in the end it came to be identified with the canon itself.

In Italy the two voice parts (in canon) are supported by an instrumental accompaniment. The poem, which was generally a sonnet, loosely constructed and depending on assonance rather than rhyme, described hunting and fishing scenes, street movements, a fire or a storm, in halting verse with an abundance of onomatopeic effects. The voices pursue each other with great animation, which is enhanced by the style of writing (hoquet).

If works like these scarcely pretend to emulate the delicate workmanship of the madrigals, they express most definitely the desire of composers to create a secular music free from technical restrictions connected in their minds with the great religious art-forms to which, nevertheless, they were prepared to revert later on, substituting in the meantime other technical devices (canon, rhythmic relaxation, hoquet, etc.) which, even in the caccia, serve to distinguish the master from the apprentice.

#### Light from England

Although, as we have seen above, the Middle Ages, in the sense of a 'middle period' of transition, a kind of 'no man's land' between two civilizations, had come to an end, as far as

Lorenzo Costa (?): The Concert (viol ► and lute). London, National Gallery.





Bramantino: Adoration of the Shepherd. Wood. Detail. Milan, Ambrosian Pinacothek ("trompette marine", lute and viol).

our subject is concerned, several centuries before the consecrated date of 1453, music nevertheless was profoundly affected by the great upheaval of the Renaissance. But in contrast to the men of letters and the philosophers, musicians did not attempt to revive the meagre relics, often culled from documents in a fragmentary state and pitiably distorted, of the music of the Greeks and Romans (an exception should be made for Baif's attempt to create "a measured music in the olden style" which will be discussed later). For them the Benaissance marked the advent of a new spirit, the reaction of man's sensibility, even sensuality, against theoretical abstraction and useless relinements in technique, and the quest for more luman forms of expression not unlike, though minus the disorder, the ideal which later was to inspire the Romanties.

The first symptoms are discernible early in the fifteenth century. In his Liber de arte contrapuncti, written in 1477, Jean Tinctoris, a celebrated theorist, declared that there had been no music worth speaking of prior to that of the last forty years: the period in question was none other than that which is dominated by the name and works of John Dunstable.

For this time it was from England that the new light shone. Until then it

had been a debatable point as to which of the two partners, England or the Continent, could elaim priority with regard to this or that innovation such as, for example, the introduction into our harmonic system of chains of thirds similar to the gymel, or the crossing of voices which Pérotin practised, but which the English theorists had been the first to describe: this method of writing is clearly set out in this example taken from Walter Odington (circ, 1300):



It is probable, however, that England had learnt more from France than she had taught her. The school of St. Martial, and later of Notre-Dame and



the University of Paris had exercised a strong attraction over her musicians, philosophers and learned men for whom music was an integral part of their culture (Giraldus Cambrensis, Adelard de Bath, Roger Bacon, Jean de Garlande, Jean de Sabilon who succeeded Pérotin at Notre-Dame, etc...). Nor must we forget the influx into the British Isles of French Troubadours and minstrels who were warmly welcomed in those circles which today we might describe as 'snob'.

Thus Bernard de Ventadour was invited to London by Oueen Eleanor, wife of Henry II, formerly wife of Louis VII of France (and grand-daughter of the first French Troubadour, Guillaume IX of Aquitania). Bertrand de Born was a friend of Henry II's sons, and associated with their intrigues. Blondel de Nesle was Richard Cœur-de-Lion's companion and is said to have helped him to escape from prison, if we are to believe the legend put about in 1260 by "a minstrel of Rheims". And a whole host of musicians, humble performers on various instruments, used to travel about from castle to castle or were lucky enough, perhaps, to settle down in the service of some noble household. This resulted in an interchange of influences which it is not always easy to disentangle, while the extraordinary amalgamation of national cultures and interests due to the Hundred Years War makes it more difficult still to establish the balance.

This situation, however, was clarified when Dunstable (d. 1453) took his place in the musical life of Europe in 1420. By then Ars Nova, both in France and Italy, was moribund. Italy was to produce no successor worthy to take Landino's place for nearly two hundred years; the generations which followed his were content to imitate the French and Flemish Masters. The interregnum, until Palestrina, was given up to music of popular inspiration, to the laude, now often harmonized in three or four parts, the upper being predominant, and to secular dances and songs-frottole, strambotti, villanelle, etc., which will be discussed later; all these had sufficiently pleasing rhythmic, and especially melodic, features but as a genre they were none the less unimportant.

In France the successors of Machault had lost their way in sterilizing complexities.

Not all composers, it is true, went in for these excesses, or at least not continuously. In addition to 'enigmatic' canons and other feats of intellectual skill, Baude Cordier, for example, wrote

Cosimo Tura: The Virgin enthroned. circ. 1480. London, National Gallery. The rebecs played by the angels standing near the Virgin are more or less imaginary instruments, but the elongated bows suggest the modern form. In the foreground a positive organ has replaced the portative organs seen, for example, in Fra Angelico's picture





rondels and ballads revealing a fresh and natural inspiration. The same is true of Tapissier, Fontaine, Carmen, Cesaris and above all Nicolas Grenon who was sufficiently appreciated by his contemporaries to be invited to teach the children in the Pontifical chapel in Rome.

There are good reasons for thinking that these men, so far as secular song was concerned, prepared the way for Dunstable; but it was Dunstable himself who without doubt opened up new paths in the development of music.

Very little is known about his life except that he was a distinguished astronomer as well as musician, that he probably lived for a time in Paris where the Duke of Bedford kept an establishment and that, like so many of his compatriots, he must have travelled in Italy.

By chance a great part of his work has come down to us, more than 50 pieces all religious music with the

50 pieces, all religious music with the exception of three songs (assuming that the most celebrated, O Rosa bella, is really from his pen, which today is

disputed).

its decline.

He shows himself to be familiar with all the resources of Continental technique, though without becoming their slave; his harmonic system includes vertical chords based on thirds, and linked more flexibly and with greater effect than the parallel fifths of the preceding age; his counterpoint, one feels, is on the way to becoming vertical harmony. He builds on a large scale, and his Masses combine the amplitude and solidity of Gothic art with Italian 'singableness'. Like his compatriot Lionel Power, he unifies more systematically than Machaut the five parts of the Ordinary in the Mass by linking them with an unchanging cantus fermus in the tenor, or by allotting to each part the same initial theme. To the other voices, for which he often writes ornamental variations, he imparts a smoothness and continuity that give a feeling of repose after the distortions and rhythmic complications of Ars Nova in

Another of his claims to fame is that he served as a model for Dufay and Binchois, the pioneers of the first Renaissance school (sometimes called the Burgundian, or Franco-Flemish or Netherlands school.

### First Renaissance school

Gilles Binchois, of Mons (circa 1400-1460), received his first musical training

▼ Francesco del Cossa: Triumph of Venus. Detail. c. 1470. Ferrara, Pal. Schifanoia. in the choir of the cathedral of Cambrai, one of the chief musical centres in Europe at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Nicolas Grenon had preceded Binchois there: Dufay, Obrecht, Tinctoris, Ockeghem and Josquin des Prez, among others, all spent some time in this privileged city which was open to all the artistic currents of the moment.

A Lament for three voices composed to the memory of Binchois in the curious style of the bilingual motet informs us, while one voice sings in Latin 'Pie Jesu Domine dona ei requiem', that this 'Father of joyfulness' ('Père de joyeulseté') had been in his youth 'an honourable man of the world' ('soudart d'honorable mondanité') before definitely deciding to take up the musical profession. After that he was to pursue his career as singer and composer at the Court of Burgundy, famed for its pomp and splendour and all the more in the ascendant intellectually since Paris was under foreign occupation or slowly recovering therefrom.

Binchois composed for his employers both sacred and secular music, and it was in the latter domain especially that he excelled. His songs, generally written for a solo voice accompanied by two instrumental parts, are simply but carefully constructed and delightfully fresh in inspiration. It is noticeable that the poems he set are of unequal value, although he sometimes chose texts by Alain Chartier or Christine de Pisan. The age of poet-musicians like Guillaume de Machaut was past. Henceforth composers tend to choose texts by second-rate poets with which they can take liberties with a clear conscience, poetry having become music's humble servant.

Guillaume Dufay (circa 1400-1474) is of a different calibre to Binchois with whom, following Martin le Franc, he is usually bracketed.

He, too, had been a chorister at Cambrai, but he travelled far more extensively, had more varied contacts and a much wider culture. In Italy where he often stayed, he mixed with the musicians of Rome, Florence, Bologna and Naples, but also with Franco-Flemish artists such as Ciconia, Jean Brassart, Hugues and Arnold de Lantins who were continuing the tradition of an Ars Nova which had already been abandoned north of the Alps. From them he could learn technical devices, from the Italians the secret of a supple and lively melodic line and a polyphony in which harmony and counterpoint were indissolubly combined.

It is not known exactly when or how he first had access to the works of Dunstable which already exhibited these characteristics as a result of similar influences; but it is clear that he both knew him and had assimilated his style.

Dufay composed secular songs of great elegance and refinement in a great variety of styles-amatory, elegiac and satirical. It was, however, in the realm of sacred music that he showed himself to be the most universal and the greatest composer of his generation. His Masses are models of constructive skill. His sacred motets are charged with deep feeling. Their sentiment is more mature than their form; those written in his youthful period are isorhythmic in the manner of Guillaume de Machaut. Sometimes, too, as for example in a motet dedicated to the glory of Florence, in 1436, he reverts to the old practice of giving the singers two different texts to sing (similar in meaning, it is true, and both in Latin); the same procedure is to be found even in Josquin des Prez (cf. the motet Alma Redemptoris Mater).

Dufay soon became a legendary figure. In 1490 the German theorist Adam de Fulda credited him, among other things, with having extended in both directions the compass of the scale ordinarily used by composers. He is also said to have been responsible for many important improvements in notation: notes of long duration hitherto represented by blacked-in shapes now became open rectangles, squares or diamonds, the black forms being reserved for notes of short duration, the newly created semi minim, fusa and semi-fusa:

990

maxime longue brève

\$\infty\$ semi-brève

minime

semi-minime
(our crotchet)

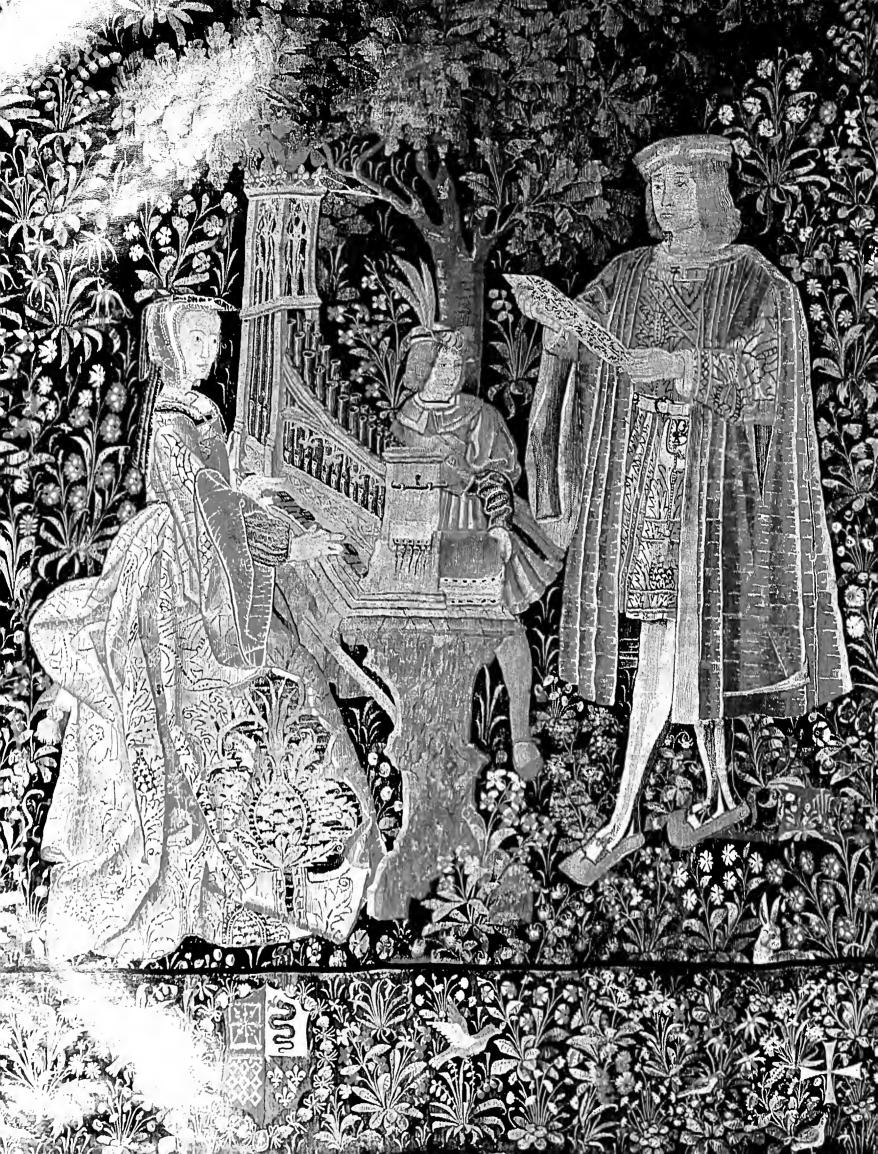
fusa
(quaver)

semi-fusa

It would be prudent, no doubt, not to accept without reservations the attribution of these innovations to Dufay, although it is probable that he perfected them and backed them with his authority. 12

One more observation in parenthesis: it is a mistake to compare, as is sometimes done, these subtleties and complexities with those to be found in some contemporary music. With the old contrapuntists the obscurity lay in the method of presentation. Once this was deciphered, their language was seen to be normal and accessible to all music lovers. In the works of our avant-garde composers the actual musical content presents quite as many, if not more, problems as the style of writing.

Dufay was still living when fame came to the most illustrious of his disciples.



Jan Ockeghem (b. Termonde, in Flanders, circa 1420) who had worked with him at Cambrai before entering, in 1452, the service of the Kings of France where he remained almost continuously until his death at Tours in 1495. The disappearance of this "luminary of Flemish art" was deplored in music by Josquin des Prez and other eminent composers, in Latin verse by Erasmus, and in French verse by Guillaume Crétin.

As a contrapuntist Ockeghem was evidently gifted for diversions of this kind, but he had at the same time a feeling for firm and well aerated structures. He was the first to use *imitation* systematically enough to deduce from it new possibilities of development. From the point of view of harmonic evolution he arranges the broad melodic lines of his polyphony in such a way that, either deliberately or instinctively, he avoids the impression of a succession of vertical chords; his final cadences are conceived in a spirit that is already quite 'modern'.

In addition to the masses and motets which constitute the major part of his work, he left about a score of songs pleasantly varied in style and expression; but in this field he is surpassed hy his pupil Antoine de Busne (d. 1492), known as Busnois, who wrote many more of which 77 have been preserved. These songs, of delicate workmanship and varied in mood—they can be tender, witty or frivolous—enjoyed for more than half a century a vogue from which the chanson Française, considered as a musical genre, has greatly benefited.

# Josquin des Prez

The generation that followed Ockeghem was dominated by Josquin des Prez, one of the greatest musicians of all time, and one whose fame was early established and has lasted longest. Born about 1442, not in the Hainaut but at Beaurevoir near St. Quentin, he was trained in the school of Ockeghem and Busnois; before he was twenty he went to Italy where he worked in various occupations until 1505 (in Milan, Rome, Florence, Ferrara and other places) visiting from time to time France and Belgium. When he died, after 1524, he was Provost of the Collegiate Church of Condé-sur-Escaut. His output was immense: he left no less than 29 masses, 119 motets, 86 secular compositions

◆ The Court air. Detail of tapestry. Circa 1500. Angers, Musée de la Tapisserie. The organ bellows are blown by the young page standing behind the instrument.

including ballads, bergerettes, and songs, nearly all with French words.

However interesting his secular music may be, his genius, as in the case of Ockeghem, found its highest expression in his music for the Church. His early works are still faithful to the polyphonic tradition, with its erudite canonic constructions, its artifices and restrictions. But, unlike the masters of the Ars Nova school, his solutions to these problems are almost invariably effortless. After him the tendency in Italy was towards an art in which expression counted for more than the desire to display a science which, though always present, had now taken second place.

Josquin attempted every form of polyphonic mass that was current in his time-masses on a liturgical canto fermo, masses on a secular song theme, like L'Homme armé or Ami Baudichon (the fifteenth and sixteenth century composers, with a sometimes surprising degree of freedom, introduced in this way into the Church themes borrowed from a very plain-speaking, not to say licentious repertory), masses on themes entirely of his own invention, messes parodiées (where the text of the mass is set to music borrowed from some existing motet or song, more or less thoroughly transformed for the occasion). The four-part vocal writing is now becoming firmer, heralding the a capella style of the age that was to follow.13

He went even further in some of the motets, one of which is in 24 parts. This was the form in which he attained the maximum freedom of expression and in which his craftmanship was most freely exercised and his melody most moving and spontaneous.

Innumerable copies of the works of Josquin des Prez were made to satisfy his admirers, and when the printing of music was invented, they were among the first to benefit from a still larger circulation. This invention, which was of capital importance and could not have come at a more propitious moment than this when music was flourishing as never before, originated in Italy, more especially in Venice. It was there that after twenty-five years of inconclusive experiments (Conrad Fynez at Esslingen as early as 1473, and Ulrich Hahn at Rome in 1476) a system of musical typography by means of mobile characters was finally perfected, thanks to which Ottaviano dei Petrucci was able to produce in 1501, under the title Harmonice Musices Odhecaton, the first and splendid printed collection of polyphonic songs. In the following year Petrucci published a set of masses by Josquin, which was soon followed by two others and several re-printings. Following his example, publishers in Rome, and after them others in the principal musical centres

in Europe, issued masses, motets and songs by Josquin; among them were Attaingnant, M. du Chemin, le Roy and Ballard in Paris, and Phalèse and Tylman Susato in Antwerp. Instrumental transcriptions were also made of them, and the leading Spanish musicians of the sixteenth century, Cabezon, Enrique de Valderrabano and Miguel de Fuenllana arranged pieces by Josquin for the keyboard, harp and vihuela (a kind of guitar whose technique resembled that of the lute). Not until the time of Palestrina and Roland de Lassus shall we find again examples of such a vast and rapid dissemination of musical works.

# Josquin des Prez and the rise of French song

Among the musicians who have a claim to a prominent place by the side of Josquin des Prez, there is one who was strictly his contemporary although many historians for some reason attribute to him seniority, and that is Jacob Obrecht, the only authentic representative of the Netherlands in what is sometimes incorrectly referred to as "the first Netherlands school". Born about 1450 at Bergen-op-Zoom, he sang, taught, and was Director of choir schools in his native town, and afterwards at Cambrai, Bruges and Ferrara. After returning to the North he left his last post at Antwerp to reside again in Ferrare where he hoped to restore his failing health; but he caught the plague there and died of it in 1505.

He wrote a great deal, with extraordinary facility. According to one of his contemporaries (Glarean) he was capable of composing in a single night a mass worthy to submit to the judgment of connoisscurs. His music is at once vigorous and expressive. A master of all the subtleties known to Flemish polyphony, he derived from popular song sources, especially in Italy, his taste for clear and already tonal harmonies. His technique, moreover, was remarkably eclectic. Although in the Mass Sub tuum praesidium he reverts to the style of the old motet, causing the voices to sing three different texts simultaneously, he was one of the first to have composed a messe parodiée based on a polyphonic motet, the celebrated Si dedero by Alexander Agricola. Obrecht was sufficiently famous for Petrucci to publish two of his songs in the Odhecaton.

We have now reached a point where it has become necessary to view our subject from a slightly different angle. Up till now we have not, it is true,



Jost Aman: An instrument maker's workshop. Wood engraving. Circa 1570.

claimed to have dealt with all the musicians known to those who have made a special study of the period, but the number of those omitted has been relatively small. From the fifteenth century onwards, and to an increasing extent as we approach modern times, the subject will assume such vast proportions that we shall be obliged to take more of a bird's eye view if we are to avoid overstepping the boundaries within which this study was to be confined.

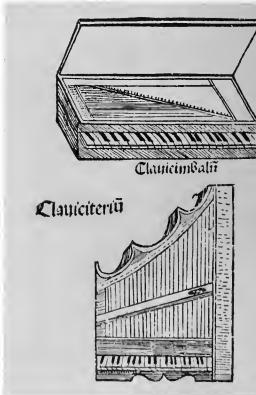
I shall therefore refrain from introducing individually the very numerous composers who were contemporary with or near neighbours of Josquin des Prez, and whose works, whether sacred or profane, are sometimes worthy to be compared with his. I cannot do more than mention some of the chief among these: Loyset Compère (c. 1455-1518) and, of the same generation, Mathieu Gascongne, Pierre de La Rue, known as Pierchon, Mathieu Pipelare, Pierre Mon-

lu, Marbriano de Orto, Antoine Brumel, Elzéar Genet, known as Carpentras. Nevertheless I consider that mention should be made, if only in a few lines, of Jean Mouton, whose real name was Jean de Hollingue (c. 1470-1522), a distinguished contrapuntist, but one whose art was as moving as it was subtle, as witness his lament on the death of Févin ("Qui ne regretterait pas le gentil Févin''). He left masses and motets written in a learned style, generally in canon. He also excelled as a song-writer, as did several of the musicians cited above, especially Loyset Compère; the song also occupies an important place in the prolific output of Josquin des Prez.

Plate from the Treatise on music by Schastien Virdung (Musica Getutscht). Basle, 1511: Clavicitherium (vertical harpsichord), clavicembalum (small harpsichord) and lyra (hurdy-gurdy).

This type of "chanson française" was so highly perfected that it was taken as a model by the majority of foreign composers at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries. So much so that threequarters of the famous collection of Petrucci, mentioned above, the Odhecaton, consists of songs either by Josquin, Compère, La Rue and de Orto, or by other masters directly influenced by their style. This style, without being in open reaction against that of Ockeghem, shows a definite tendency to a lightening of texture. The rhythms are simpler and more lively, and approximate more closely to those of speech, and the polyphonic writing tends towards vertical harmony. Instrumental support is no longer needed, although instruments can be freely substituted for any voice that may be missing, and indeed the whole composition could quite well be entrusted to instruments alone. The French chanson of the early sixteenth century not only gave rise to numerous transcriptions for the lute, organ or harpsichord; it also was the origin of two instrumental forms which will be met with later, one destined for stringed instruments the other for the keyboard, one leading to sonate form and the other to fugue.

About the year 1520 a distinction began to be made in France and Flanders between two types of song. The Northern masters Nicolas Gombert, Thomas Crequillon, Jacques Clément (known as "Clemens non Papa"), Jean Richafort, all great composers of sacred music, remained faithful to the 'scientific' type of polyphony; and the contrast between the opulence of these concerted



pieces in four, five, six or more parts and the frivolity of the words, is often very striking. A song by Richafort, about 1550, written in a very sober and chaste style, is a setting of an old and ribald parody of the famous sequence Verbum bonum et suave:

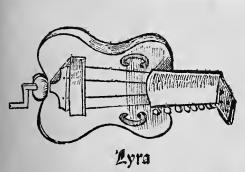
Vinum bonum et suave Bibit abbas cum priore Sed conventus de pejore Bibit cum tristitia.

(The Abbot and the Prior drink the finest wine, but the monk has to put up sadly with the worst.)

But about this time a vogue set in for songs of a lighter calibre which were mostly the work of the Parisian composers Claudin de Sermisy, Passereau and Sandrin. The characteristic features of their style were: total subjection of the musical to the poetic form, syllabic treatment of the words which range from the most delicate lyricism to an eroticism of the most transparent kind, rhythmic precision, which was to facilitate instrumental adaptations (canzone), and the alternation of binary and ternary rhythms for expressive purposes.

# Janequin and descriptive music

All these features were brought to the highest degree of efficiency by the undisputed master of this school, Clément Janequin. The fame of Janequin spread far and wide. The greatest poets of his time sang his praises, and esteemed



Dae ist eben als das virginale/alleines hat ander saiten von den dormen Bschauc vird negel die es harpsen machen hat auch sedertile als das virginale. Ist neis lich exfunden und ich hab tr nür eins ge seben. Die ander artder saitespildye selben haben nit schlissel. Aber bünde väsunst gewisezile oder gemercte/do man sicher griff mag haben/Als vff den toren und Binden/nach welchem man die sele



A. Schlick: Salve Regina. German tablature for organ and lute. (Tablaturen etlicher Lobgesang und Liedlein.) Mainz, 1512. Above: Loyset Compère: Messe de l'Homme Armé. Kyrie in canon. Published by Ottoviano dei Petrucci, Venice, 1505. Petrucci was the inventor of a system of music printing with moveable type.

it a privilege to collaborate with him; but there are still many gaps in his biography. Today we have good reason for thinking that his birthplace was in the neighbourhood of Chatellerault, about the year 1490, and that he probably died in Paris about 1560 after a somewhat impecunious existence, although he enjoyed protection from the highest quarters. He left two masses, a motet, five books of psalms and spiritual canticles, but above all more than 275 songs in three and four parts published between 1520 and 1559. Written in every style, these songs all display the most exquisite taste and imagination. The best known ones are of a descriptive nature.14

Janequin's greatest successes, judging from the number of copies printed, not only in Paris but in Lyons, Venice and Antwerp, were: Caquet des femmes, La Bataille, Chant des Oiseaux, Chasse du cerf, Cris de Paris, Le Rossignol, L'Alouette, Prise de Boulogne, Siège de Metz, etc... and above all, La Guerre, later entitled Bataille de Marignan which, through the medium of its four voices alone, describes in all its episodes the victory of François I with astonishing realism.

Further evidence of the vogue enjoyed by this type of song is seen in the fact that conservatively-inclined musicians began to follow the fashion. Gombert himself wrote a *Chant des Oiseaux* and a *Chasse au Lièvre*, while the young Parisian school showed a preference for such themes which the Italians also adopted; others, like Francesco de Milano and Andrea Gabrieli, Annibale Padovano, made brilliant instrumental transcriptions of the *Bataille de Marignan*.

# Orlando di Lasso, "Prince of musicians"

It is in the domain of the French chanson that we now come to one of the greatest and strangest figures in

in those days between musicians and the nobility.

In his enormous output — two thousand works — which include all forms: Italian madrigals, German songs and sacred music, the 157 French songs occupy a relatively modest place Among the Frenchmen of his generation must be counted a number of song-writers many of whose miniature masterpieces have been brought to light by Henry Expert. One of these at least deserves to be named — Guillaume Costeley, probably the most original of



Jacques Patin: "The comedy-ballet of the Queen performed at the wedding of the Duc de Joyeuse and Mademoiselle de Vaudemont by Balthazar de Beaujoyeulx, valet de chambre to the King and his mother the Queen". 15 October 1581. Our illustration shows the entry of the 'Tritons'.

the whole history of music-Orlando di Lasso the "Divine" Lasso, the "Prince of Musicians" as he was universally known throughout Europe, a genius whose diversity of inspiration and technique, fecundity and universal culture are quite astonishing. Born in 1532 at Mons, in the Hainaut, and the possessor of a voice of such beauty that he was carried off three times by admirers while he was still a chorister at St. Nicolas of Mons, he was on the third occasion allowed by his parents to enter the service of Ferdinand Gonzague, Viceroy of Sicily, who took him to Palermo and afterwards to Milan. After that he travelled in Italy, Flanders, Germany, England and France until in 1556 he accepted the post of choir master at the Court of Bavaria and settled in Munich where he remained, except for short periods of absence, until his death in 1594. He was the recipient of the highest honours; raised to noble rank by the Emperor Maximilian II, created a Knight of the Golden Spur by the Pope, he lived with his employers on a footing of familiarity and equality that was rare

Chanson de Clément Jannequin on a poem by Ronsard (superius and tenor).

as regards quantity. But they are of exceptional beauty. Lasso has an exquisite ear for French prosody, and no one has set texts by Marot, Ronsard and other poets of the Pléiade with greater tenderness or understanding.

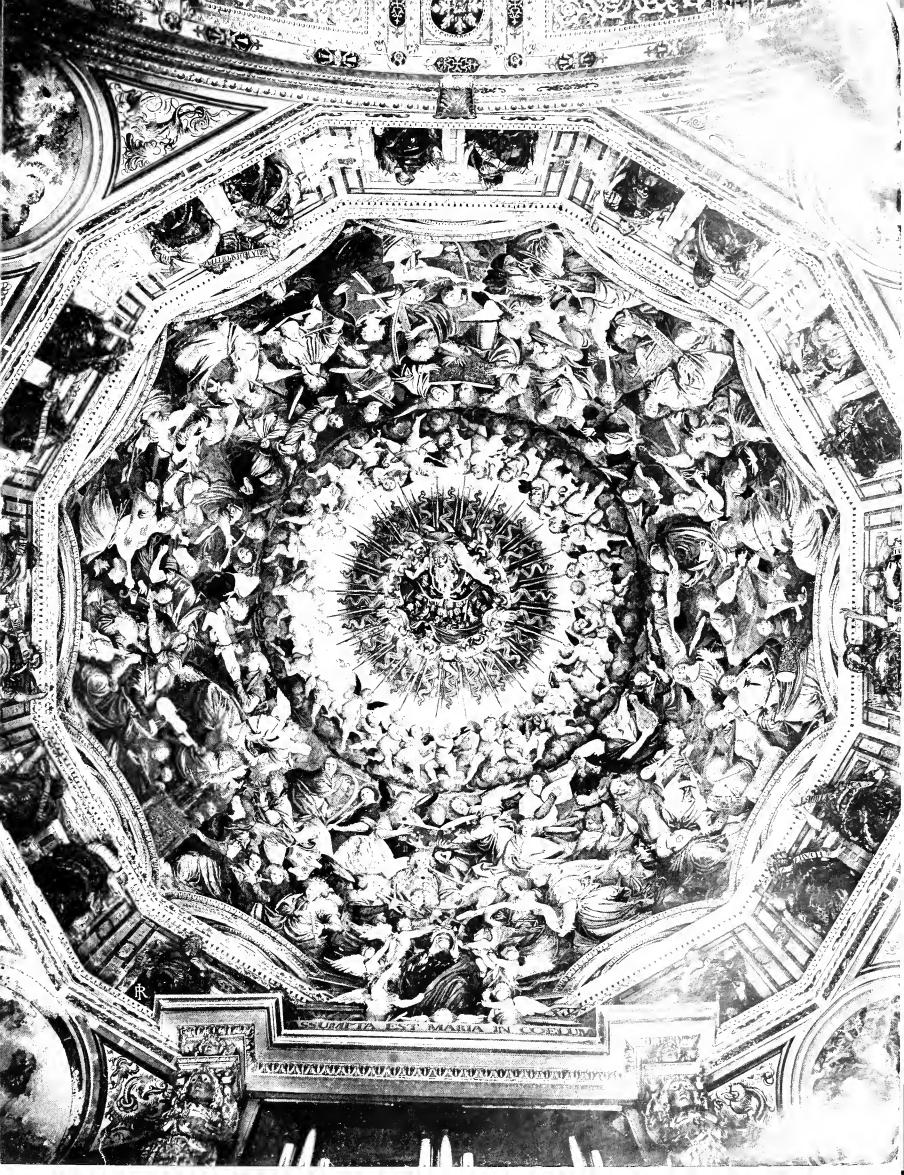


them all; an alert and subtle master of rhythm, a delicate harmonist (for harmony and counterpoint were intimately connected at the time of which we are writing, he already represented the new aesthetic based on nuances which characterized the work of Couperin and which was to be adopted by Claude Debussy.

# The poet-musicians of the Pléiade

In the meantime the French chanson was about to take a new direction. In 1494 a German humanist, Conrad Celtes, professor at the University of Ingolstadt, wishing to make it easier for his

Gaudenzio Ferrari: Cupola of church at Saronno. 1535. The large orchestra shows all the instruments in use in the 16th century: positive and portative organs, harps, lutes, psalteries, "flûtes à bec", transverse and double flutes, straight and curved cornets, trumpets, pipes, bagpipes, rebecs and every variety of stringed instruments.



pupils to understand the metrical system of the Odes of Horace, hit upon the idea of asking one of them, Petrus Tritonius, the second of their seansion; this he asking in the long syllables a rhetheric invation twice as long as the known His compositions in note-for-note syllabic counterpoint were published in Augsburg in 1507.

Whether or not they were aware of the Celtes-Tritonius venture, the poets and musicians of the Pléiade tried to revive just this kind of music adapted to the old classical metres, but with a very different aim. They wanted both to establish a poetical system based on quantity, after the manner of the ancient Greeks and Romans, and to associate music with it as closely as the old Greek bards had done accompanying their recitations on the lyre.

Such was the primary object of the Académie de Poésie et de Musique founded in 1570, with letters patent granted by Charles IX, by Antoine de Baif and Thibaut de Courville; this was a professional association whose members included authors, men of letters, philosophers, virtuosi and choreographers. But the amplitude and diversity of its membership was proof that it had much more ambitious aims than merely to bring about a fusion of poetry and music.

This is perhaps the place to recall that the poets of the Pléiade had for the most part assimilated the ideas of the Florentine Academies, which will he discussed later in connection with the origins of opera. They cultivated, in fact, a kind of neo-Platonism, being anxious to establish a common bond between not only two separate arts, but - leaving aside all the philosophical and religious implications which would result therefrom — between all the arts. This would lead logically to the lyric theatre, where the eye, the mind and the ear - provided the spectacle is a success—find equal satisfaction.

It was these theories, then, that accounted for the creation, under the influence of Baif and his friends, of a theatrical work in which, for the first time, music and dance were brought into close co-operation: Circe, or the Ballet comique de la Reine (ballet comique) here does not mean a 'comic' or humorous ballet, but a comedy in the form of a ballet. The person responsible for the pectacle, which was given in 1581 on the occasion of the marriage of the de for euse to Mlle, de Vaudemont, E Mazar de Beaujoveulx, or Bal-- Belgiojoso, an Italian who Assume ome thirty years i of been very success-

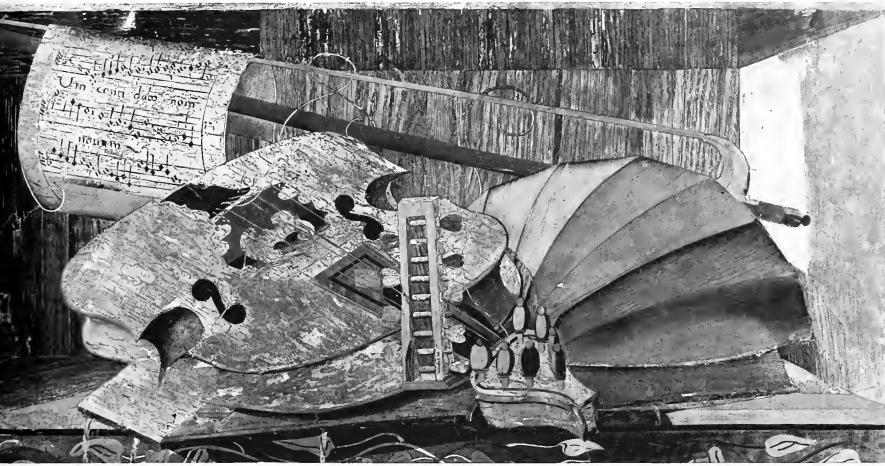
Words in the Composite Massachus (1997) and tabor), L503, Words of Bichartz Museum



ful at Court. I say 'responsible' rather than 'author', as his role seems to have been similar to that of Diaghilev in the Ballets' Russes at the beginning of this century, or of some great film producer who suggests a scenario, chooses the script-writer, composer, decorators and it was also an improvement on the pastorales and Italian interludes from which, nevertheless, Beaujoyeulx had certainly borrowed some ideas.

The Ballet comique de la Reine was a brilliant success. It marked the advent of a new formula—the Court Ballet.

quered career, at one moment enjoying the protection of the authorities, at another being persecuted as a Protestant and obliged to seek refuge far from Paris whence he returned to enter the service of Henri IV a few years before his death in 1600.



Seven-stringed lyra da braccio, lute, bow and score. Inlaid panel attributed to Fra Vincenzo da Verona. Circa 1515. Paris, Louvre.

performers and rules them according to his fantasy. It appears probable that Beaujoyeulx conceived the idea and plan of this entertainment and then distributed the various duties. For the text he enlisted the services of Chesnaye, the King's almoner; the music was commissioned from Lambert de Beaulieu and Jacques Salmon—although he himself was a musician, "the best violinist in Christendom" according to Brantôme; and Jacques Patin, Court painter to the King, was responsible for the scenery which was on a grand scale; the Voûte Dorée from which emanated sounds which resembled the Music of the Spheres dear to the neo-Platonicians, caused a sensation.

I shall not attempt to describe the plot of the Ballet comique which is confused and somewhat incoherent since it served merely as a pretext for a spectacle in which song and dance play the leading part. Such as it was, however, this production was definitely superior to even the most magnificent ballets and masquerades which had been traditional for a long time already at the French and Burgundian Courts;

In the next century, however, the French were to deviate considerably from this prototype when, in their Ballets à entrées during the period 1620-1650 they made music and dancing take precedence very definitely over poetry. It was in England especially, in the 'Masks' of Ben Jonson, Milton and other eminent poets, that the formula invented by Beaujoyeulx was perpetuated and considerably enriched.

Outside the theatre Baïf's enterprise had had less spectacular, but no less fertile consequences; among which must be reckoned the work of the composers who had carried out his ideas, namely, Jacques Mauduit, Nicolas de la Grotte, Eustache Du Caurroy (whom we shall come across again when dealing with instrumental music), all gifted and charming musicians who could be on occasions both vigorous and expressive but who, it must be admitted, appear rather insignificant by the side of a master of the first rank, Claude Le Jeune. Born at Valenciennes about 1530, Claude Le Jeune, of whose early youth little is known, settled in Paris in later life and had a somewhat che-

In his immense œuere, comparable to that of Lassus in its abundance and variety (several hundred psalms, almost as many madrigals and songs in 2, 3, 4 and even up to 10 parts, instrumental fantasias, etc...), 'measured' music "in the olden style" occupies quantitatively a modest place—some 33 songs and a book of psalms. On the other hand, its quality is quite outstanding. Apart from his 'measured' or 'metrical' compositions, he broadened the style of the chanson, made the melodic line more supple, thanks to a plasticity of rhythm which he had learnt from his handling of the old 'metres', and gave infinite variety to the disposition of the voices following the example of the Italian madrigalists, his contemporaries, with whom we shall be dealing shortly.

It is not the least of the merits of Baif and his school that they should, at the same time as their colleagues beyond the Alps, have prepared the way for the reform (we should call it 'Revolution' were it not a case of a change gradually brought about during more than half a century) that was to result, about the year 1600, in

the triumph of the 'accompanied melody', thus fostering the growth of a new lyrical spirit and leading inevitably to the birth of Opera.

# Development of new forms in Italy: the madrigal

Let us turn, then, to Italy which had in the meantime assumed the leadership of the musical movement in Europe which had been for so long the prerogative of France and the Northern countries. Throughout the whole of the fifteenth and the first third of the sixteenth century, during which time literature, science and the plastic arts had made enormous progress in Italy, that country still derived its 'learned' music from Franco-Flemish sources.

About the year 1500 Italian music found its most authentic expression in popular forms, or at least in forms that were inspired by popular art, in its spontaneous lyricism, its distrust of over-complex structures, its diversion from scholastic counterpoint which, however skilfully it is contrived, the more damaging it is to the words (we shall hear more of this controversy in respect of sacred art in the time of Palestrina).

I had, in anticipation, referred to the transformation which the laude were to undergo at that period, passing from the monodic stage to that of melodies in four-part harmony, without sacrificing their primitive simplicity.

In secular music the ballads of the preceding century were still in favour to some extent, but new forms were attracting increasing attention on account of their direct appeal and wide range of expression which made them readily accessible to the masses, while the quality of their poetic texts appealed to the taste of the élite.

First of all, the frottola; the etymology of this word has been variously interpreted, some linguists considering it to he a diminitive of frutto, i.e. 'little fruit', while others take it to mean 'a composite dish' (from the mediaeval word frocta) in allusion to the varied nature of the poems appropriate to this form. It is generally a cheerful kind of song the words of which are arranged, in the type most often met with, in strophes of six lines. completed by a refrain of four lines (the ripresa). The poems, as we have already indicated, are of the most varied description: verses by Petrarch, Bembo or Sannazaro; ecclesiastical Latin, and also classical Latin, especially Horace. But most of the verse is of an amatory nature, generally beginning on a languorous note and ending with unequivocal libertinages.

The music is deliberately simple: a theme in two short sections, usually in note-for-note four-part harmony. The composers of the *frottole*, who were generally erudite, endeavour to conceal their erudition. The most piquant rhythms are chosen, and the most natural accentuation. One voice is predominant, the accompaniment, usually in two or three-part harmony, is preferably entrusted to instruments or, failing that, to other voices.

The earliest frottole were the work of Franco-Flemish musicians settled in Italy (Josquin des Prez, Loyset Compère, Japart); but those who specialized in this form, Bartolomeo Trombocino, Marchetto Cara, Michele Pesenti, Andrea Antico, etc... mostly came from towns in the north of Italy, Mantua, Verona or Modena. That the frottole were popular both with the masses and in high society is borne out by the number of collections — eleven in all — that were published by Petrucci in less than ten years, from 1504 to 1514.

The strambotto, more elegiac in character, and sometimes pointing a moral, is still simpler in structure, consisting of a series of strophes, each of eight lines, the first six rhyming alternately, while the last two introduce a new rhyme. 15

The last collection of /rottole was published in 1533. At this moment a new poetico-musical form for which a great future was in store was coming into favour—the madrigal

into favour—the madrigal.

At first, it resembled, at least in intention, the form that had flourished two centuries earlier under the same name. But the relationship was only on the literary side, and all the two had in common was in the choice of texts of greater refinement than those found in popular song. And there are exceptions even to this, as from time to time cycles of madrigals, like those of Banchieri, make their appearance reproducing all the provincial patois, and the jargon of the different trades in a style where the caricatural element is as pronounced as in the Carnival songs.

As regards the music, the old technique was completely forgotten; the methods employed by the first madrigalists of the sixteenth century are very similar to those used by the composers of frottole. But soon a process of international changes came into play which was to lead to the revolutionary innovations of the succeeding age—the concertante style, the basso continuo, the oratorio and—opera.

The attraction which Italy had for long exercised over Northern composers was intensified during the fifteenth century. There was every inducement for them to travel. The royal houses of Florence, Rome, Siena, Mantua, Verona, etc., vied with one another in the field of material and intellectual

luxury and did not hesitate to engage artists in foreign countries to whose talents their attention had been drawn. Musicians who had had in this way the privilege of serving under a sky for which the harsh climate of Flanders aroused in them nostalgic longings, sought every opportunity of leaving their home country again.

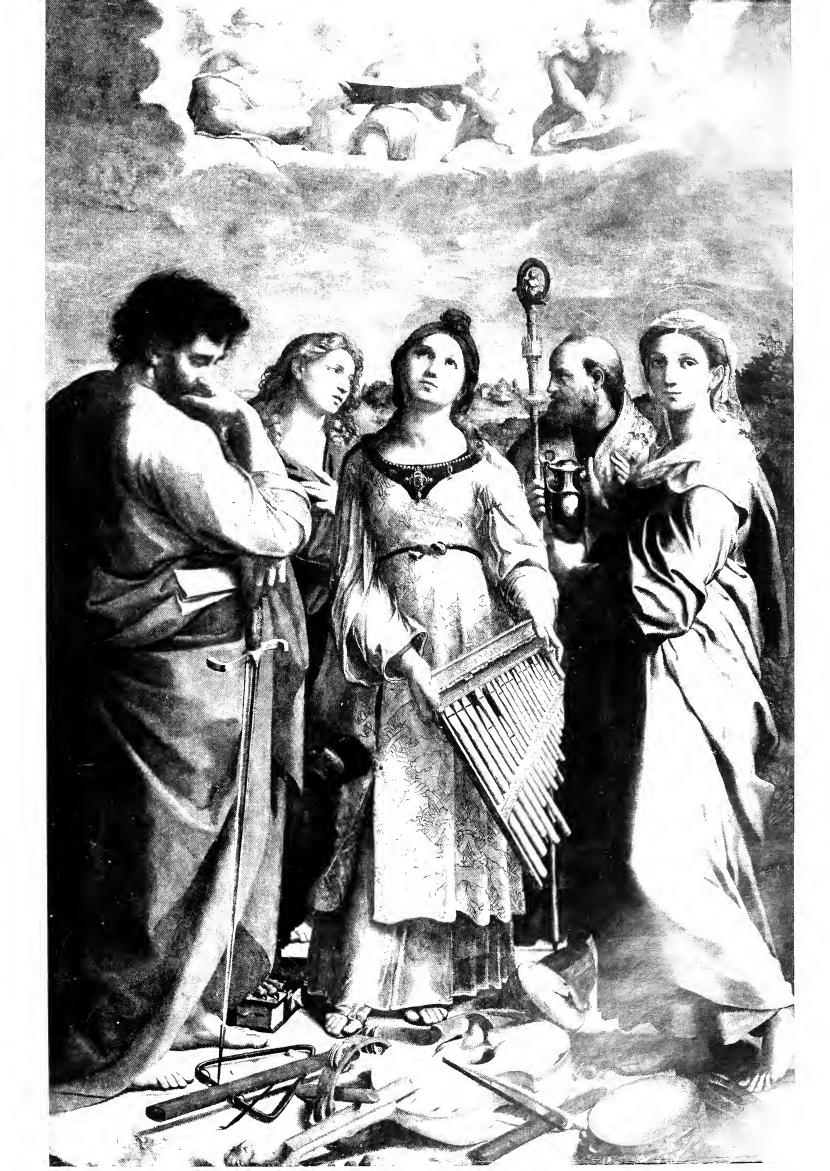
The result of this was twofold. The Franco-Flemish brought with them stylistic habits and strict rules of composition and construction from which the Italians could benefit, while they themselves at the same time were able to absorb the lyricism and freshness, the profusion and fantasy of Mediterranean art. The evolution of the madrigal will show how these exchanges turned out for the benefit of Italy and enabled her to regain her pre-eminence in musical Europe, which was to last until the beginning of the classical era, about the year 1750.

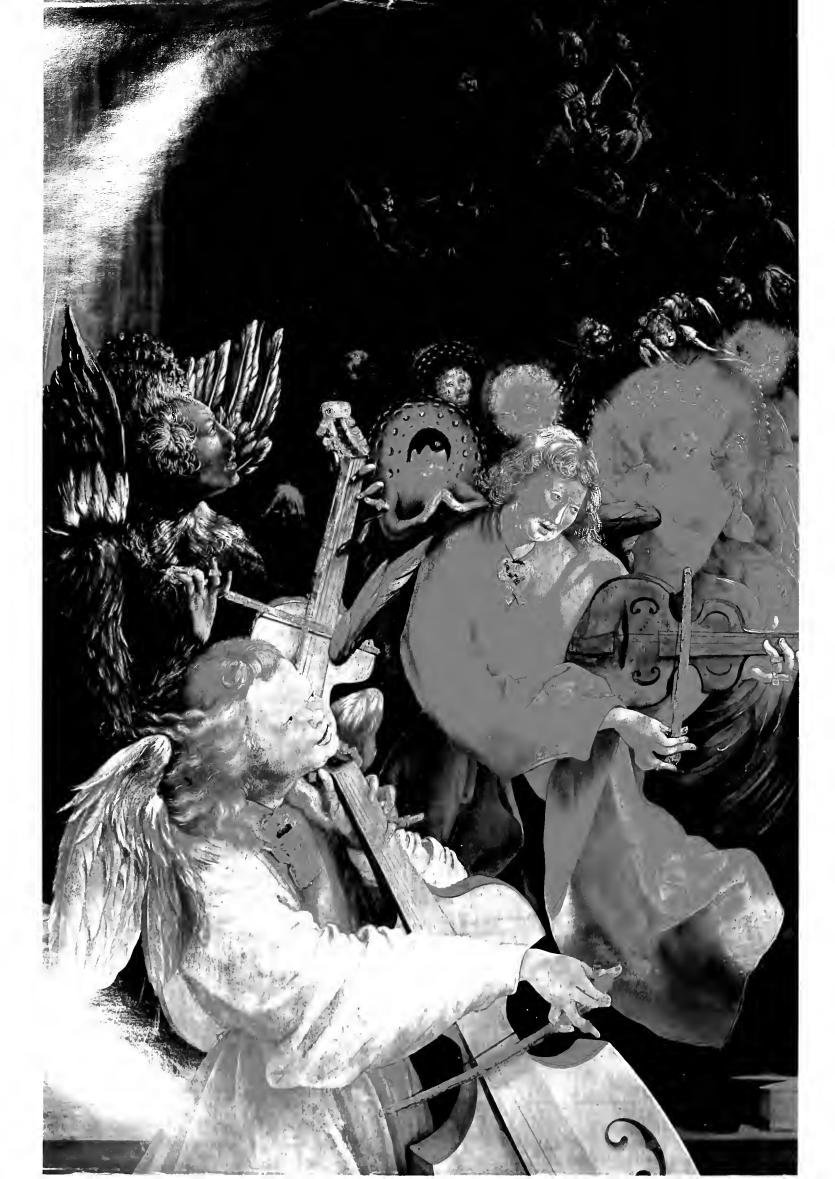
The first madrigals published in Rome in 1533 were by the following composers: Philippe Verdelot, who came to Italy from Flanders as a young man, sang in Rome and Venice, and in 1530 became choir master in Florence; Jacob Arcadelt who was also born in Flanders and died in Paris in 1557 after spending many years in the Peninsula, where his collection of madrigals, dated 1539, was re-printed sixteen times in thirty years; and a few Italians, notably Costanzo Festa who ended his career as choirmaster at the Vatican.

These early madrigals are relatively short works, settings of agreable poems not restricted to a hard-and-fast verse formation, treating of love and the beauties of nature in a refined and sometimes precious language. The music was equally refined. It was designed, not for a chorus, but for three or four singers seated round a table. It is for this reason that in the printed editions the three or four parts are often set out on two pages opposite each other, or even on a single page, each part being printed parallel to the sides.

During the period of its maturity, roughly between 1550 and 1580, the madrigal expanded in every direction; the number of voices was increased from three or four to five or six and even more, five being the normal strength; its range of subjects was extended; its style reverted occasionally to polyphonic imitation. But it definitely escaped from the tyranny of the canto fermo. The composer freely invented music to fit the poem as closely as possible. The theme ceased to be a mere

Raphael: Saint Cecilia. e. 1513. Bologna, Pinacoteca. The saint's attitude, eyes raised towards the angel choir and ignoring the instruments, evokes the recommendations of the Church which favoured choral music without any instrumental accompaniment.





ornament superadded to the text; it was expected to be as expressive in itself as the words. And this was achieved by the men who may be considered to be the classic masters of the madrigal, Adrian Willaert, Orlando di Lasso, Cyprien de Rore, Philippe de Monte, Andrea Gabrieli, and Palestrina, all of them eminent composers whom we have already encountered or will encounter in other domains where they were equally distinguished. In their music the polyphonic texture of the madrigal was enriched, while at the same time, thanks to a skilful use of all sorts of contrasts, it acquired fresh subtleties and greater diversity. Tonality was firmly established, although this did not exclude a chromaticism which was exploited by the third generation of madrigalists, that of Luca Marenzio and Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa, with a freedom and an audacity which seem astonishing even to our blasé modern ears. Marenzio (1553-1559), whom his compatriots called "Il più dolce cigno", had inherited the all-pervasive sweetness of his predecessor Arcadelt, but to this he added, in some of his madrigals, a dramatic accent which already conformed to the "stilo recitativo e rappresentativo" which was to be the operatic style; and among the enigmas with which we are confronted about this period is the ability to express, through the medium of a vocal quarted or quintet, emotions and sentiments of an essentially personal nature.

Gesualdo pushes to extreme lengths both the expression of pathos and that harmonic emancipation which he cultivated as a new means of arousing emotions. His art is the faithful reflection of a strange personality, full of violent contrasts. Born about 1560 of rich and aristocratic parents, he was passionately devoted to music which he studied as if it were to be his profession. He played the lute and the theorbo and composed, although his moral character was in no way mollified thereby; deceived by his beautiful wife, he had her assassinated, as well as her love, and a child whom he believed to be the fruit of their guilty passion. Like his life, his madrigals contain passages of alternate violence and exquisite suavity, while the boldness of some of his harmonic progressions (in contrast to others which may be completely normal), the sudden modulations and exacerbated chromaticism are three centuries in advance of their time.

At the point to which Gesualdo had brought it the madrigal was ripe for

■ Mathias Grünewald: The Virgin with the angels. Isenheim altarpiece, detail. 1512-1515. Colmar Museum. Unlike many painters of his day, Grünewald here represents contemporary instruments very freely with more imagination than accuracy. a change from the old polyphony to the new style which was to be adopted at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The transition was effected in the works of Caccini, Orazio Vecchio and, above all, Monteverdi whose first four books of madrigals (1587-1603) are



Viol da gamba, made at Lyons by the Bavarian Gaspard Tieffenbrucker. circ. 1550. The Hague, Municipal Museum.

purely polyphonic, while the fifth and sixth (1605-1614) introduce the accompanied solo to which the seventh book (1619) is unequivocally devoted.<sup>16</sup>

### England under the Tudors

In England, after the death of Dunstable and Lionel Power some time had to elapse before any musicians of European repute re-appeared upon the scene. Not that musical life had come to a stop; only recently have been brought to light numerous works of sacred music by Gilbert Banastre, Walter Lamb, Richard Davy (probably the first English author of a Passion written about 1500 but unfortunately imperfectly preserved), Hugh Aston, precursor of the "virginalists" (whom we shall be dealing with later), William Cornyshe, Robert Fairfax, all most accomplished musicians who wrote large polyphonic compositions in 4, 5, 6 and 7 parts in complicated rhythms, some of which reveal considerable powers of expression. The most interesting among the composers of this transitional period is John Taverner (c. 1495-1545), the author of eight masses written in a contrapuntal style of remarkable virtuosity. One of his masses, Gloria tibi Trinitas, contains the canto fermo In Nomine Domini which gave rise to an instrumental type of composition adopted by the greatest English masters up to Purcell: the 'In nomine' in which this theme is treated polyphonically and arranged for the lute, viols or keyboard instruments.

We will not pursue any further the history of sacred music under the Tudors, despite the interest attaching to the works of Christopher Tye, Richard Farrant, William Munday and above all Thomas Tallis, the greatest name since Dunstable. We shall have occasion to speak of him later in his capacity of keyboard composer.

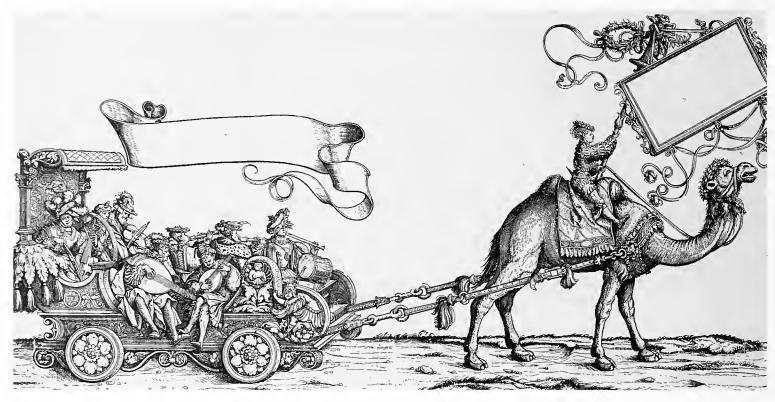
Secular song is brilliantly and abundantly represented by a school of madrigalists which began with the four-part madrigals of Thomas Morley (1594) and flourished until about 1620, the most productive period being from 1597 to 1613, with Orlando Gibbons, John Wilbye, Michael East, Thomas Weelkes (almost as bold as Gesualdo in his use of dissonance) and at least ten others, not counting those who described what are really authentic madrigals as Canzonets, or simply Songs. Among these was the great William Byrd (1543-1623) who, in a collection dated 1588, anticipated Monteverdi by risking an unprepared dominant seventh. 17

# Renaissance German song

While the initiative in musical matters was passing from the Northern countries to Italy, Germany continued to play a relatively modest part. It was not until the eighteenth century that she came to the fore, despite what complaisant historians have claimed at certain periods when nationalist feeling was running high. Did not Dr. Eugen Schmitz, in his revised edition of Naumann's classic handbook, find proof of the harmonic sense of the ancient

from 1460: the Lochamer (or Lochheimer) Liederbuch, Glogauer Liederbuch, etc... Apart from transcriptions, a few German musicians tried their hand at polyphonic composition, for example Oswald von Wolckenstein. The first among these whose works are compar-

many as a young man and then to Italy where he was in the service of the Duke of Ferrare and afterwards, in Florence, of Lorenzo the Magnificent; later we find him at the Court of Maximilian in Innsbruck, and again in Florence where he came back to die



Hans Burgkmair: The Triumph of Maximilian, The Musicians' Coach. Wood engraving. Metropolitan Museum, New York.

Germanic tribes in the fact that they found it difficult to sing the simple Gregorian monodies?

These wild assertions, however, must not conceal from us the fact that there was indeed a striking development of the musical sense among Germanspeaking peoples from the Middle Ages onwards. This is proved by the importance they attached to song, which does not, however, preclude the existence among them of brilliant exponents of learned polyphony and instrumental art.

German song is not popular in the sense of being 'reserved for the people'; it belongs to the nation as a whole. "Kings and beggars, peasants and hunters, soldiers and monks, fine ladies and grooms all take pleasure in the same song". During its monodic period our knowledge of it is derived from what remains of the reportory of the Minnesingers and Meistersingers. But a great number of songs have been preserved thanks to the transcriptions for several voices made in the fifteenth century which, together with a certain number of monodic and polyphonic songs of the Flemish school, are contained in the precions collections dating

Portrait of Palestrina. Anon. Rome, Oratorio Convent. able with those of the Franco-Flemish masters are Heinrich Finck (1445-1527), Paul Hofhaimer (1459-1537), a gifted harmonist, Ludwig Senfl (1490?-1555?) who is more of a contrapuntist, and, last but not least, Hendrick Isaac who is by far the most engaging personality. Born in Flanders about 1450, he went to Ger-



in 1517 after re-visiting Germany and Austria. In his mastery of counterpoint he resembled Josquin; while in the flexibility of his inspiration he reminds us of Roland de Lassus. Like him "he expresses himself in Flemish like a native of Flanders (which he was), in Italian like an Italian, in German like a German, in French like a Frenchman"; but his sensibility is perhaps most attuned to the German Lied, and in fact by far the hest known of his works is the Lied Innsbruck ich muss dich lassen.

A form peculiar to the Germany of the Renaissance, which was both popular and scholarly, was the quodlibet, a polyphonic composition which combines in a humorous way the themes of songs of the most varied description. Ludwig Senfl excelled in this, and J. S. Bach amused himself by adding with the most scholarly precision to the last of the Goldberg Variations two very popular refrains.

The German lied was cultivated during the Renaissance by many foreign composers, e. g. Mathicu le Maître, Antonio Scandello and Jacques Regnart, not to mention Lassus and Isaac as noted above. But some Germans went to Italy to learn the secrets of the art of madrigal. Hans Leo Hassler of Nuremberg (1564-1612), who was a pupil of Andrea Gabrieli in Venice and



a fellow-student with Giovanni Gabrieli, wrote Italian madrigals, and also German madrigals which are in no way inferior to their models.

We left sacred music at the time when the Franco-Flemish composers of Josquin des Prez's generation were enriching it with their masterpieces. As with secular music, it is in Italy that we have to look for their successors. At once the name of Palestrina claims our attention-an illustrious name, magnified still more by legend: the reader of the loregoing pages will indeed have difficulty in attributing any historical value to the astonishing poem which Victor Hugo, in Les Rayons et les Ombres, entitled "Que la musique date du seizième siècle", and from which we learn that Palestrina practically invented the art of music and that "Gluek, Beethoven and Mozart" descended in a direct line from him.

# Palestrina and the a cappella style

Palestrina, whose real name was Giovanni Pierluigi (Palestrina was his birthplace) was born in 1525. Taking up the career of church musician at an early age, from his 19th year onwards he had occupied successively the increasingly coveted posts of choir-master, organist and, in 1555, member of the choir in the Sistine Chapel. After Pope Paul IV had dismissed married musicians, he gave up this post with some reluctance to become choir-master at St. John Lateran. In 1571 he occupied the same position at St. Peter's in Rome. He died in the Eternal City in 1594 after a somewhat agitated life in which sickness, misfortunes and bereavements alternated with periods of happiness and success. From 1567 to 1571 he left the service of the Church. In 1580, having lost his first wife and several of his sons, he was admitted to Holv Orders and became a priest. The following year he renounced the priesthood and married the widow of a rich merchant, a dealer in lurs, whom he aided actively in the business while continuing to compose.

He left 105 masses, 280 motets and more than 200 other religious works and 'spiritual' madrigals, in addition to some 95 secular madrigals, songs, etc.

He brought to the highest pitch of purity and plenitude the unaccompanied a capella style of choral singing which the Tranco-Flemish musicians had interpreted before him, but not with the tranco-continuity, nor in such a way

Han, Baldon, Grant: The three Graces, Circa 1540, Madrid Prado Museum.



as to make, as he did, the addition of an instrumental accompaniment seem useless, and even a hindrance.

In separating in this way the voices from the instruments he was endorsing the views of the dignitaries of the Church, although these views were not precisely new. It was in 1513, twelve years before the birth of Palestrina, that Raphael had painted the St. Cecilia in the Museo Civico at Bologna with her eyes fixed upon a celestial choir of angels, while at her feet lies a heap of damaged instruments, and several pipes are missing from the little portable organ which dangles from her hand. It has been claimed that Palestrina saved the polyphonic style of Church music whose existence had been endangered by the Council of Trent (1543-1563) by composing the noble Missa Papae Marcelli. It is true that the Council wished to simplify Church choral music and had abolished tropes and sequences (except five) and that some of its members, considering that polyphony dilutes or distorts the texts and renders them unintelligible, advocated a return to the simple Gregorian plain-chant; these, however, were in a minority. The others were merely anxious to prevent an abuse of counterpoint and the use of canti fermi borrowed from secular song, and this was confirmed by a decision of the commission set up for this purpose in 1564, although this did not prevent composers from constructing their masses on forbidden themes. They merely refrained from mentioning them in the title, and Palestrina forestalled them all by writing his Missa Quarta in 1582 on the famous and profane air of L'Homme armé.

If anyone exercised a moderating influence over the Council of Trent, it was certainly not Palestrina, but probably the Flemish musician Jacob de Kerle who was present at the meeting in 1562-1563 while in attendance on the Cardinal of Augsburg.

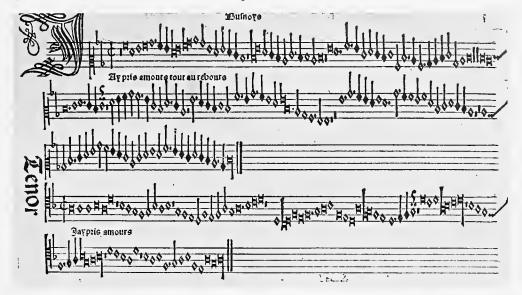
It is true, nevertheless, that Palestrina dominated his epoch by the loftiness of his inspiration and the perfection of his style. He had no equal in the art of combining vertical harmonies, used with the fullest awareness of their potentiality, with a smoothly moving counterpoint whose supple lines remind one of a drawing by Raphael. His art is characterized by grandeur without grandiloquence and, although devoid of human passions, has great expressive power.<sup>18</sup>

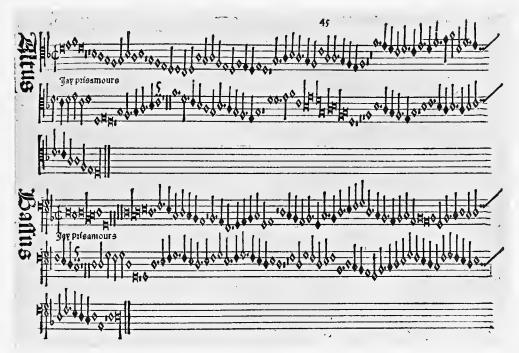
The Roman school, of which Palesstrina was the leader and the crowning glory, included other musicians of outstanding merit such as Giovanni Maria Nanini (c. 1545-1607), Marc Antonio Ingegneri (whose Responses for Holy

■ The Master of Half-figures: Young girl with a lute. Hanover, Provincial Museum.

Week, still used in all cathedral choirs, were for a long time attributed to Palestrina), Gregorio Allegri whose celebrated *Miserere* was admired and noted down from memory by the fourteen-year-old Mozart, and Francesco Soriano (or Suriano) whose music often recap-

ness of outline obtained by startling dramatic contrasts which give to the works of the Spaniards, e. g. the motet Emendemus in nebius by Morales, or the Jesu dulcis memoria and O vos omnes by Victoria, an unmistakeable national flavour similar to that which





French song by Busnois: "Ay pris amour" from Harmonice Musices Odhecaton, published in Venice by O. Petrucci in 1503.

tures the naive emotion of the Laudi spirituali.

To this school it is customary to attach, somewhat artificially, the Spanish masters Cristobal Morales (c. 1500-1553), Francisco Guerrero (1527-1599), and Tomás Luis de Victoria (c. 1540-1611). All three lived in Rome for some time; the first and third were even members of the Pontifical Chapel, and Victoria had been a disciple and friend of Palestrina. But there can be no real resemblance between the inspiration of a Palestrina as I have attempted to define it and the mystic fervour, overwhelming élan and sharp-

marked the romances and ballads of the preceding century, alternating as they did between asceticism and the violent expression of sombre passions or no less exalted joys.

Among the contemporaries of Palestrina we find again, defying classification here as in every other domain, the powerful and universal genius of Orlando di Lasso, author of more than a thousand motets (516 of which have been collected in his posthumous Magnum Opus Musicum of 1604), 100 Magnificats, and the Masses, in several of which he cheerfully defies the ban on the use of secular refrains. In these

works we find technical accomplishment of the highest order combined with an inexhaustible richness of invention, a style which is always being renewed and a proficiency in the handling of large ensembles only equalled by his careful workmanship and attention to the minutest detail (sometimes with an imaginative exuberance that suggests the theatre rather than the Church).

Independent though he was, if Lasso must at all costs be attached to some school', then certain aspects of his temperament would suggest, not so much the school of Rome as that which was then being formed in Venice.

### The Flemish in Venice

The city of the Doges had always been an important musical centre. Already in the early Middle Ages the manufacture of hydraulic organs was a prosperous industry there: in the year 826 a priest, "Georgius quidam, presbyter de Venetia", received an order for an organ for Aix-la-Chapelle and another for the Abbey of St. Savin de Poitou. Venice also made an important contribution to religious and secular popular song; in the thirteenth century its musicians were already composing Laudi spirituali in which the essential features of Italian melody—spontaneity, charm,

rhythmic freedom—were to be established firmly enough to resist the danger of drying up under the influence of the scholastic music of the Flemish masters. But this did not happen; the Flemish composers who had settled in Venice,



Nicolo dell'Abbate: Young girl playing the virginals. Drawing. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum. Below: Frans Floris: The van Berchem family. 1561. Lierre. Vuyts-van Campen and Caroly Museum.

and Willaert especially, derived inspiration from this popular repertory and preserved its savour and spontaneity.

So far as 'scholastic' music is concerned, it was Adriaen Willaert of Bruges (c. 1485-1562) who, if not the actual creator of the Venetian school, at least enriched it with that uniformity of doctrine and technique which enabled it to influence so profoundly the future of music.

A pupil of Jean Mouton, Willaert was already living in Italy in the service of the House of Este when the Doge, Andrea Gritti, appointed him choir-master at St. Mark's in 1527. He was neither the first great musician nor the first Flemish musician to settle in Venice. He had been preceded by Pierre de Fossis, among others. Also before his arrival, the organists of the Serene Republic achieved fame, even outside their own country-for example, Dionisio Memmo who was fêted at the Court in London in 1516. By this time St. Mark's was familiar with music for two alternating choirs, each supported by an organ. Finally, it must not be forgotten that it was at Venice that the printing and publishing of music had been initiated by Scotto and Petrucci who were followed by the Gardanos, the Vincentis, the Magni, etc.

Willaert arrived in time to cultivate a magnificent field but one in which progress was delayed by a certain indecision in the presence of new tendencies. He was able to pass on to





Titian: Venus and the organ player. Circa 1545-1548. Oil painting. Madrid, Prado.

his new fellow-citizens both the knowledge he had inherited from Jean Mouton and his own discoveries, and at the same time to take advantage of local traditions and idiosyncrasies. He systemized a method of writing for double chorus, while his organists, Annibale Padovano and Girolamo Parabosco, developed on parallel lines the technique of instrumental dialogue. But his contribution went further than mere questions of form. In the boldness of his modulations and use of chromaticism, in his contribution to the ricercar, the precursor of fugal form, and in that liveliness of attack, learned from the Venetians, that distinguished his madrigals, one of which, relating the story of Suzanna, already foreshadows the oratorio, he displays real imagination. It was not long before Willaert's initiative leed to fresh progress being made, this time by Venetian composers of whom the most prominent were his own pupil Andrea Gabrieli and the latter's nephew, Giovanni Gabrieli. But these two masters really opened up a new era, at the beginning of which we shall have occasion to return to them again.

# The musicians of the Reformation

In addition to the masses and motets of the Catholic Church, the sixteenth century saw the rise of a new kind of

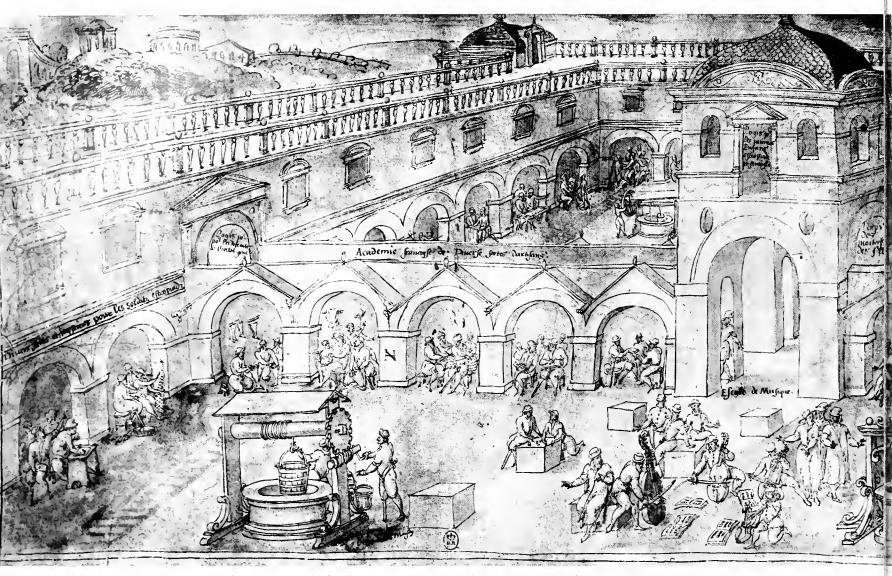


Ornamental capital letter by Plantin from a work by De La Hèle, "VIII Missae quinque, sex et septem vocum", pub. 1578.

religious music, inspired by the Reformation in Germany, Switzerland, France and England.

An enthusiast for music, and himself a composer (the hymn Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott (A strong fortress is our God) has been attributed, though with no certainty to him), Luther saw in music "a gift from God, and not from men, which causes anger, impurity and other vices to be forgotten". He therefore wished that the general community of worshippers should take as active a part as possible in church services. For that reason it was essential to find an art form that would be simple, grand and at the same time suitable for collective performance. These three conditions are satisfied by the Protestant

Luther and his collaborators did not aspire to setting up an entirely new musical repertory, and did not hesitate to have recourse to the ample treasure-house of popular song, fitting out the old, secular tunes with edifying texts. They even borrowed occasionally from the Catholic liturgy; thus, the Veni Redemptor gentium became Nun komme



School of Music (on the right, quartet of viols). "A performance of some motets during the journey of Queen Louise of Lorraine from the Louvre to the Faubourg Saint-Marceau." Anonymous drawing, 1584. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale.

der Heiden Heiland. The greatest German composer of the day, Hans Leo Hassler, even went so far as to transform one of his love songs—"My heart is troubled by a sweet young girl"—into a pious choral in four parts—O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden (O Head, covered with blood and wounds).

As early as 1524 four books of monodic chorals made their appearance in several towns in Germany. The same year Johann Walter published, for the use of more experienced singers, chorals in from three to six parts. Ludwig Senfl, Thomas Stolzer, Michael Praetorius, composed chorals of this type, thus preparing the way for the instrumental choral with organ which was shortly to reach its full development.

Among the Calvinists the situation was less brilliant. Without going so far as to prohibit music of any kind, a Zwingli had done in Zurich, Calvin and allowed the unison singing of Phalme in his Temples. Not that he was appared to music. Like Luther, he that he massic was "a gift from God", but the lange and melodies composed solely for the pleasure of the ears

like all the trimmings and chirrupings of the Papist church, as well as what they call 'broken music' (the English 'broken consort', or concert of instruments of various kinds), 'made-up' music (res facta, i.e. 'learned', or scholastic compositions, completely written out and not improvised) and vocal music in four parts, are not only unsuitable for the majesty of the Church, but cannot be performed there without greatly displeasing God." He adopted the versified translations of the Psalms made by the French Protestant poets Clément Marot and Theodore de Bèze and, like Luther, turned to popular song to find the melodies to which these verses could be adjusted. But it was inevitable that composers of talent should attempt to treat these same psalms polyphonically and compose original ones themselves to be sung in private at intimate spiritual concerts. And this is precisely what was done by the French composers Louis Bourgeois (c. 1510-1561) Claude Le Jeune, Claude Gondimel (born c. 1505 at Besançon and assassinated in Lyons in 1572, during the massacre of St. Bartholomew). Their versions differ

from the German chorals on account of the greater flexibility of their polyphonic writing which is not confined to a simple note-for-note harmonization of the melody, but is somewhat reminiscent of the church-music style of the generation of Josquin des Prez.

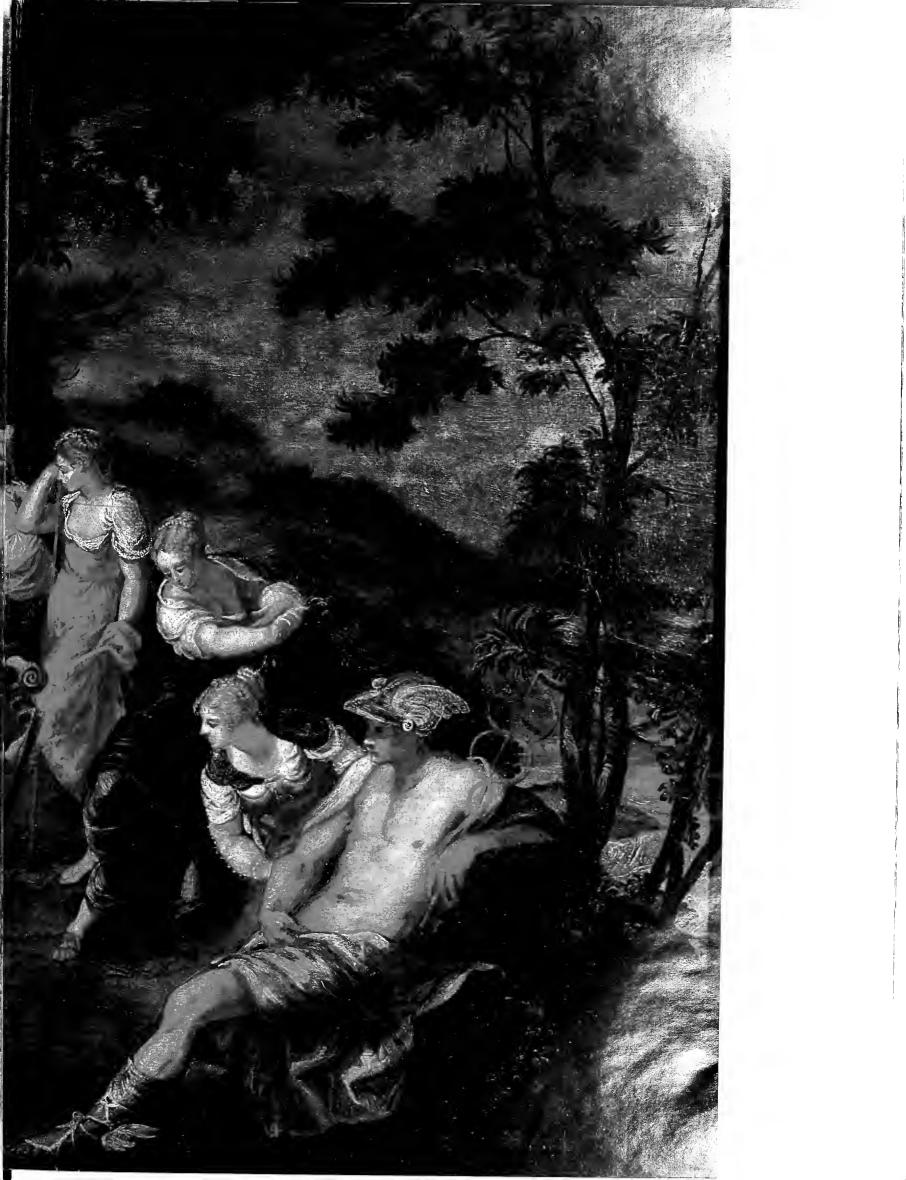
In England, the Reformation was responsible for two forms of religious music, the Service and the Anthem. The Service consisted of all the canticles and fixed items like the Kyrie and Credo, etc., forming part of morning

Hans Hell: Title-page of Patrocinium Musices by Orlando di Lasso, published between 1573 and 1576. At the top a somewhat cramped celestial concert; below a profane concert, probably portraying the members of the Bavarian Court chapel of which di Lasso was in charge. Instruments include: a spinet, viol da gamba, lute, transverse flute, two cornets, two trombones and viol da braccio. The choir consists of three men and two children; on the extreme right, the Kapellmeister himself.

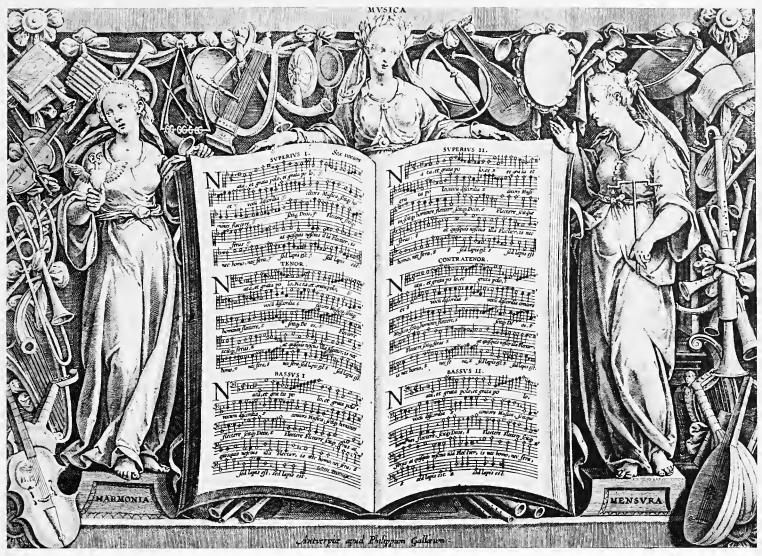
Pages 58-59, Tintoretto: Concert. Painted on harpsichord lid. Paris, priv. collection.











Motet for six voices by Pevernage. Frontispiece of Encomium Musices, a collection of songs published by Philippe Galle, after J. Stradanus, circa 1590.

and evening prayers, and the commumon service. The text was always in English, although the passages borrowed from the Roman Catholic ritual preserved their Latin or Greek title. The principal composers in this field were Christopher Tye (c. 1500-1572), Thomas Tallis (c. 1505-1585), who also set Latin words in his church music, notably the famous motet in 40 parts for 8 choirs, Spem in Alium nunquam habui, and William Byrd (c. 1542-1623). In the works of Byrd the form is amplified and enriched by effects of contrast as between the choir and solo voices accompanied on the organ, or between half the choir and the full choir.

The Anthem is the Anglican equivalent of the motet. It is simpler in style, more like the choral, with its syllabic diction and square-cut rhythm. The principal anthem composers were the same as those who composed the first Services.

◆ Orlando di Lasso and the private music chapel of the Duke of Bavaria. Miniature from the Mielen-Codex. 16th century. Munich, Bavarian State Library.

# The emancipation of instrumental music

From the beginning of our era to the period which we are now dealing with vocal music had reigned supreme. At the same time there was in existence an instrumental art to which we have often referred, if only episodically, and it is now time to give a brief account of its development: for it was at this moment that it was about to win its complete independence which was to result in new forms: the Toccata, Sonata, Symphony, Concerto, etc., which were to bring forth as many master-pieces as the great polyphonic epoch in past centuries.

This retrospective survey will be made more difficult by the fact that instrumental performances were often in the nature of improvisations, and also because the system of notation, if any, was of a rudimentary kind, since the executants had preserved much longer than singers the right, if not the obligation, to embroider the written text with ornamentation.

In considering, to begin with, the instrumental material, we will not attempt to describe the very numerous wind instruments already enumerated in the poems and theoretical treatises of the Middle Ages, as no decisive progress was made in their design or construction until the latter part of the seventeenth century; until then they were used only to accompany dances and in open air performances. The strolling minstrels who played them soon formed their own guilds and corporations. In France they were under the patronage of St. Julien des Ménétriers. In 1321 they drew up statutes which ensured for them to some extent the protection of the law. The great German towns had their municipal musical societies whose special instruments were the trumpet, trombone and cornet (the mouthpiece of which was of brass, while the body, made of wood or ivory, was pierced with holes that enabled it to play melodic figures impossible on the trumpet. Certain trumpets, however, as early as the fifteenth century had a mouthpiece mounted on a sliding tube, like the trombone, thanks to which



Caravaggio: Lute player. Oil painting. Leningrad, Hermitage.

they could sound notes other than the natural harmonics. It was the virtuosity and narrowly specialized skill of these municipal musicians that enabled J.S. Bach to conceive the formidable trumpet parts in the Brandenburg Concertos.

The instruments which played the most important part in the period under review were the keyboard instruments organ, clavichord, harpsichord, stringed instruments played with a bow, and the lute.

Since the very early days ninth and tenth centuries when the organ had only about ten levers which were very difficult to manipulate, progress had been rapid. About the year 1200 there were real manual in eyr tence, covering

nearly three octaves. The first known pieces for the organ 14th century make use of all the chromatic semi-tones in the octave, and we have seen how Francesco Landino in those days was already astonishing his contemporaries by his prowess on the portative organ. By the end of the century some organs had two manuals and a set of pedals.

Almost at the same time the clavichord made its appearance and also, in a modest form, the harpsichord. The difference between these two instruments, which are often mistaken for each other on account of their outward resemblance, lies in the way their strings are struck. In the clavichord they are made to vibrate by little metal tongues which strike from beneath

when the keys to which they are attached are depressed. In the harpsichord and other instruments of the same family, the strings are plucked by points of quill or hard leather attached to wooden jacks which move in an upward direction when the keys are depressed. Both types of instrument made their appearance in the four-teenth century, and both are described by Jean de Muris in his Musica speculativa (4323).19

The first precise description of the harpsichord is to be found in a treatise of 1544 written by the German Sebastian Virdung. The instrument soon became popular, and was made in different shapes and sizes. The larger ones, which were generally in the form

of a triangle or trapezoid, were called clavecin in France, clavicembalo in Italy, harpsichord\_in England, Kielflügel in Germany. The small ones were called épinette (spinet, spinetta) or virginals. The latter term was commonly used in England in the fifteenth century to denote a small rectangular harpsichord placed on a table for playing, and later on was applied to all kinds of harpsichord. The theory that the word virginal was connected with the preference shown for this instrument by Queen Elizabeth, 'the Virgin Queen', is discounted by the fact that the virginal is mentioned round about 1460 in the Liber viginti artium by the Bohemian Paulus Paulinus.

As regards instruments played with a bow, which are of greater antiquity, many of the numerous varieties known to the Middle Ages were discarded in the fifteenth century in favour of a group of instruments forming a homogeneous family (excluding the rebec which had been relegated to the lowest order of strolling players), the family of viols which, in imitation of the vocal quartet, were named soprano, alto, tenor and bass and, in the lowest register, the double-bass (violone). All these instruments, including the soprano (dessus de viole in French terminology) were played while held on or between the knees —hence the term da gamba. The name viole da braccio on the other hand was given to all the instruments of the violin family, including the violoncello and double-bass, which were gradually to supersede the viole da gamba after about 1520-1530. The 'consort' of viols survived in England until the end of the seventeenth century. Everywhere else in Europe only the basse de viole (approximately equivalent to the violoncello) lasted so long and, in France, even longer; for there the dynasties of the Marais and the Forquerays were





Three Singers. German engraving, 16th cent. Paris, Petit Palais (Duthuit collection).

still delighting the ears of music-lovers at a time when Rameau was producing his first masterpieces and the classical era was about to begin.

As for the lute, an instrument of which the strings are plucked, the body being shaped like a mandoline and the peg-box set at right angles to the finger-board, it made its appearance in Spain and from there spread all over Europe in the fifteenth century. It originated in the East, where it had existed for more than three thousand years in many different shapes. During the period in which it was popular in Europe (16th and 17th centuries) it had eleven strings representing six notes altogether.

Jacopo Zanguidi: Lute player. Detail of pen drawing. Florence, Uffizi Galleries.

Until the beginning of the fifteenth century we do not know with any certainty what all these instruments were used for or in what manner, for reasons which have already been suggested. They evidently served to support and supplement the voices which they gradually supplanted in accompaniments to dancing. Their repertory consisted mainly of transcriptions of dances or pieces of vocal music, either sacred or profane. Like those which we shall encounter towards the middle of the following century, their notation differs from that of the vocal music of the same period. The system adopted for instruments was the tablature in which the stave, notes and duration signs are replaced, wholly or in part, by letters, figures and diverse signs.20

### Early instrumental forms

The earliest specimens that have come down to us of purely instrumental music are the *estampies* of the thirteenth century, already mentioned. In the

In religious music, apart from transcriptions of motets, certain polyphonic vocal works contain instrumental passages which serve as introductions (Introitus) or transitions. An early fifteenth-century motet by Johannes Franchois has an Introitus for four



Vincenzo Capirola: Lute tablature (Italian notation). MS. executed in Italy c. 1517. Chicago, Newberry Library.

century that followed certain dances for a solo instrument, probably a bowed viol, display both breadth of style and a remarkable modernism as regards tonality. Here is one taken from a manuscript in the British Museum (Add. 29987) in which all four sections show the same alternation between our major and minor modes. I reproduce only the first section:

Prima pars

Dowland: Ayre "Come, heavy Sleepe" from a collection printed in London in 1597. Left, the air is in normal notation for the voice and in lute tablature for the accompaniment. On the right, notation for vocal ensemble: the voice parts are distributed as if for reading round a table.

trumpets forming an independent piece, differing in structure from the choral section that follows.

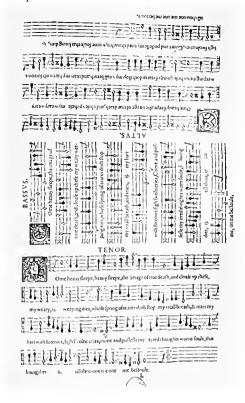
In the same century the German



organists wrote for their instrument pieces which have been preserved, in tablature, in precious collections such as the *Ileborgh* collection (1448), the Buxheimer Orgelbuch (c. 1470) and, most celebrated of all, the Fundamentum organisandi, the most ancient treatise on instrumental composition in existence. This is a systematically arranged collection of studies in counterpoint, preludes and transcriptions for the keyboard, sacred and profane songs and dances-all composed or compiled in 1452 for the instruction of his pupils by the famous organist of Nuremberg, Conrad Paumann, who was blind, like Landino before him and, like him, famed throughout Europe.

After him, the Germanic countries had a number of excellent organists; outstanding among these was Paul Hofhaimer (1459-1537), one of the Emperor Maximilian's musicians, and founder of a brilliant Viennese school.

In France, the publisher Attaingnant began to issue in 1529 transcriptions for the organ of sacred musical works as well as transcriptions of songs by Févin, Josquin des Prez (for the organ or spinet: in those days no distinction was made in the writing and it was left to the performer to interpret the music in the manner best suited to his instrument). The first Ricercari for organ by Girolamo Cavazzoni appeared in Italy in 1542. The ricercar already existed in the repertory of the lute and other instruments; but the term was then applied to rather slight works, written in a fairly free style, in the nature of preludes, in which rapid passages alternated with sustained chords. The organ ricercar, and similar pieces intended for instrumental ensembles by Hofhaimer, Jacques Buus, Willaert, Annibale and





Italian School: Open-air concert. 16th cent. Bourges Museum. The quartet consists of a spinet, a lute, a flûte à bec and a bass viol.

Padovano were, on the contrary, the equivalent of hig polyphonic vocal works. They are based on the principle of *imitation*, and in this respect foreshadow the fugue except for the fact that they do not yet possess the fugue's powerful unity of structure.

# The Golden Age of the virginal

In the meantime, in England, key-board music in the hands of the great virtuosi on the virginals made equally striking progress in the course of the sixteenth century. In developing variation form, which had long been in use (especially among players of dance music as a means of rendering less tedious constant repetitions of the same

theme) they freed themselves from the servitude of contrapuntal imitation in order to devise passages calculated to show off the resources of their instrument in the matter of tone-colour and flexibility. They were, in fact, the first to write music which was no longer, according to the convention of the age, 'suitable for all instruments', but definitely and exclusively intended for a specific instrument.

The Golden Age of the literature for the virginals was approximately from 1575 to 1625 when the works of William Byrd, John Bull, Thomas Morley, Giles Farnaby, and Orlando Gibbons were collected in the famous manuscript collection known as the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book (c. 1621) and in the first printed collection of virginal music, the Parthenia or The Maydenhead of 1611.<sup>21</sup>

But the virginalists' technique was not confined to variation form. They

wrote dances, particularly pavanes and gaillardes (the pavane, a slow dance, probably of Spanish origin, of a noble character and in binary rhythm, and the gaillarde, a lively dance in triple time with which it was generally associated and often thematically connected, enjoyed a great vogue until the middle of the sixteenth century; superseded by the passamezzo and the saltarello, they passed then into the realm of stylized dance music which was to provide material for the partitas of Bach and for the sonata da camera). They also delighted in descriptions of carillons, storms and hunting scenes of which the liveliest specimen is probably the set of variations The King's Hunt attributed, but with no certainty, to John Bull (c. 1562-1628); here all the features of the chase, including the Halloo at the kill, are evoked with a realism which does not detract from the musical design.

Humour has its place, too, in this repertory, as in the piece called Himselfe in which John Bull sketches his own portrait.

The English at this period also cultivated a type of instrumental music which, although not peculiar to them, enjoyed greater popularity and lasted longer than anywhere else: I refer to the Fancies, or Fantasias, for a consort of viols; these were pieces in a relatively free contrapuntal style, as compared with the ricercar. Concerted instrumental music at the end of the sixteenth century creates a curious impression of ad libitum.

When, in the title of a polyphonic composition, mention is made of the instruments, this is generally because they are looked upon as possible substitutes for the voices: "suitable for instruments as well as for voices". And yet poets, chroniclers and memorialists have described for us concert scenes which leave no doubt as to the existence of purely instrumental music, apart from mere dance accompaniments. The dialogues of Ercole Bottrigari entitled Il Desiderio overo de' concerti di varii strumenti musicali (Venice. 1594) are full of such scenes set either at the Court of Este, or in a convent at Ferrare where the nuns form an orchestra of strings and wind which one of them conducts with a bâton. More detailed still is the account given by Massimo Trojano of the festivities held at Munich in 1568 on the occasion of the marriage of Duke William of Bavaria to Renée de Lorraine, with Orlando di Lasso as director of music. Here we see instruments playing a very important part, not only in open air music and dances, but also during banquets where music was played by an ensemble of trombones and cornets, or a sextet of viols da braccio (violins of different kinds), or again by unusual combinations such as harpsichord, trombone, flute, lute, musette, 'echo cornet' (cornetto muto), viol da gamba and transverse flute. On a certain day a piece in 24 parts was played first by instruments alone —viols da gamba, violins, bassoon, three kinds of cornet, musette, dolzaina (a kind of oboe) and trombones and then a second time with the addition of eight singers.

It will be seen, then, that concerted instrumental music had an independent existence. The clearest proof of this is to be found in published works written for four viols or violins in France and Germany, notably a fugue dating from 1532 in perfect string-quartet style in Hans Gerle's Musica Teusch. In England so popular were pieces for 4, 5 and 6 viols that the "chest of viols" in the sixteenth century was an essential article of furniture in the house of any self-respecting music lover, and the name 'broken music' was given to music written for any heterogeneous collection of instruments not belonging to the viol family.

# The lute and the Court air

An instrument much neglected today. the lute, occupied in the musical life of the Renaissance and until the end of the seventeenth century a place comparable to that to which the harpsichord succeeded later. An asset in its favour was the softness of its sound (for in those days people of refined taste preferred soft-sounding instruments; thus in France and England the violin, which had already made its appearance in 1520-1530 but was considered too strident, had to wait for more than a century before it was tolerated in private houses); it was also easy to handle, and amateurs appreciated being able to read the tablature without having to know solfège and thus get to know a repertory of which the more elementary parts were easily accessible. In this way they were able to play transcriptions of songs and dances à la mode which each individual could interpret according to his ability, either plain and unadorned, or else enlivened by an ornamentation limited only by the technical proficiency, imagination and taste of the performer.

It was therefore an art which was largely favoured by amateurs. But as soon as this stage, which demanded only a minimum of effort and an elementary culture, is left behind, a new universe is opened up. To the initiated, the lute is an instrument capable of unusual sonorities, the finest nuances and supple and varied rhythms. Above all, from the point of view of harmony, it is the vehicle of a new, quasi-esoteric language. Chord sequences and contrapuntal figures cannot be played integrally, as on a keyboard instrument: the lute-player proceeds by ellipses, suggests more than he affirms. A complicity is thus established between him and his cultured audience; he is surrounded by an enchanted circle from which the illiterate are debarred.

It would require a great deal of space to do justice to the innumerable composers whose talent or genius is recorded in the tablature collections, either in manuscript or published between 1507 (Intabolatura de lauto, Ed.

Petrucci, Venice) and the end of the seventeenth century. To mention only the most illustrious names, I will cite the following: in Spain (where the movement originated) Luis Milan (collection of 1536) and Luis de Narvaez; in Italy, the famous Francesco da Milano, Vincenzo Galilei, Fabritio Caroso; in France, Adrien Le Roy, Guillaume Morlaye, Albert de Ripe and, in the following century, Charles Mouton, J.B. Bésard, the Gaultiers, the Gallots, Robert de Visée, etc.; in Germany, Hans Judenkönig, Hans Gerle, Hans Neusiedler, Esaias Reussner, Silvius Leopold Weiss; in Poland, Bacfarc; in England, John Dowland, Thomas Morley, Thomas Campion, Rosseter, and Francis Pilkington.

Their popularity is attested by the number of illustrations, paintings, engravings and drawings in which they and their instruments are portrayed, and by the tributes paid to them by poets and prose-writers in every language. The lute has always been, par excellence, an instrument for accompanying the voice, like its bass counterpart the archlute, used solely for accom-

panying.22

Songs with lute accompaniments were cultivated in Germany at an early date, and specimens are to be found already in the Lochamer Liederbuch (c. 1450). In Italy Petrucci and his colleagues published several books of them (frottole and other secular songs) as early as the beginning of the sixteenth century.

In France the vogue enjoyed by the lute is intimately connected with the success of the Air de Cour. The first collection to appear under this title was the Livre d'Airs de cour miz sur le luth by Adrien Le Roy, published in 1571. Others followed until the middle of the seventeenth century, containing works by Le Blanc, Planson, Tessier, Gabriel Bataille, Antoine Boesset, Pierre Guédron, etc.23

To return, before closing this chapter, to purely instrumental music, it is important to note that during the long period which we have been recapitulating the appearance of numerous Methods' marked the transition from empiricism to an established technique.

Curiously enough, most of these 'Methods' devote much less space to purely technical problems than to the embellishment of the melody by means of diminutions (ornamental variations, in Spanish glosas) to which, for example, Diego Ortiz' treatise is entirely devoted. This is a sure indication of the amount of licence permitted to executants, which they were able to enjoy increasingly until the middle of the eighteenth century.

# The pre-classical age



Gerolamo Frescobaldi: Toccate e Partite d'intavolatura di cembalo. Toccata Otava, Rome, 1614.

### Tonality and the bass continuo

The hundred and fifty years or so which elapsed between the end of the sixteenth and the middle of the eighteenth century were rich in innovations which determined the future course of music. It was this period that saw the rise and development of the forms and techniques of composition and orchestration and the trend of taste which still govern, to a large extent, the music of the present day. It saw the birth of opera, oratorio, the sonata and its derivatives, the symphony, the concerto grosso and the solo concerto, while at the same time-or perhaps for that reason-major-minor tonality became firmly established, and polyphony went out of favour and was replaced by accompanied melody.

Despite the diversity of its contribution to the arts, this period of a century and a half is marked by such characteristic features that historians have felt obliged to give it a name. The difficulty is to agree upon what that name should be. A certain number of German and Anglo-Saxon musicologists have baptized it "the baroque era", by analogy with the corresponding phase in the plastic arts. In French, the



Claude Mellan: Gerolamo Frescobaldi. Drawing. Paris, Ecole des Beaux-Arts.

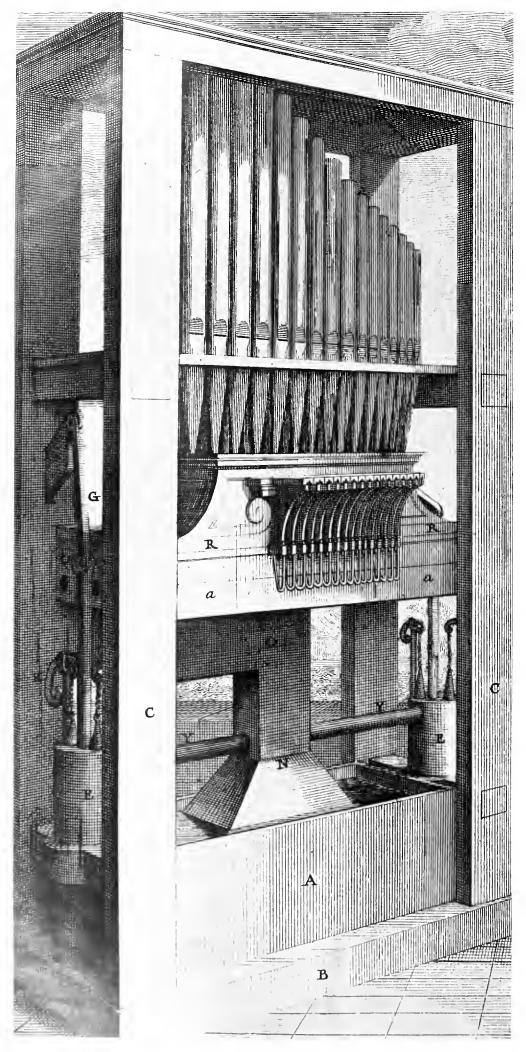
definitely pejorative sense attaching to the word baroque is an obstacle to its adoption. To call it the period of the concertante style, or of the Basso Continuo (these terms will be explained later) would be nearer the truth though still insufficiently exact, so that it seems reasonable to opt for the label "preclassical era" which delimits a period of time (c. 1680 - c. 1750) without prejudice to what it contained.

And yet, among the features universally acknowledged to be characteristic of the baroque, there are several which were to leave a strong imprint on the stage of musical development to which we are coming now: ebullience, desire for movement and expansion, and a medley of different tendencies.

The various phenomena which lead to the establishment of any new musical form are so closely interlocked that it is often impossible to determine the exact point of departure—to decide, for example, whether an aesthetic innovation was inspired by a technical discovery, or vice-versa. I mention this in order that the reader may not be tempted to forget how closely synchro-

P. P. Rubens: Education of Marie de ► Medicis. circ. 1622. Louvre, Paris.





nized are the various elements which we shall be considering in succession, but in an order that has no hierarchic significance.

One radical change that affected every branch of musical creation was that which resulted from the gradual elimination of the ancient modes in favour of a major-minor tonality as established in the scales of C major and C minor or their transpositions. This modern tonality was to be stabilized towards the end of the seventeenth century,24 but we have met with it already in its purely melodic aspect, as far back as the thirteenth century, in France, Italy and England. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries we have seen how the notion of harmony began to take shape when it became possible here and there to see in polyphony not merely the horizontal progress of several interwoven voices, but a succession of vertical chords. In the works of the sixteenth century polyphonic composers the melodic lines are more and more wedded to tonality, and their "counterpoint," saturated in harmony, necessarily follows the same

But the art of the contrapuntists was threatened. Since the 'ballads' of Guillaume de Machault and the Italian vocal music which developed out of the frottole, a form of solo melody with instrumental accompaniment came into favour. The advent of tonal harmony and the emancipation of melody brought in its train an important simplification of musical notation: the standardization of all accompaniments by means of the 'figured bass'.25

The system of the figured bass lasted until the middle of the eighteenth century in various forms; at first its realization was confined to a small number of very simple chords, but in Rameau's day figures were used not only to indicate much more complex harmonies but to suggest 'imitations' which restored to counterpoint some of its former vitality.

# The birth of opera: the "Camerata"

At the time of which we are writing, shortly before the year 1600, counterpoint was being attacked. Although intended to serve the human voice, it was accused of dislocating the texts on which the music was composed, and of distorting the prosody and even rendering it totally unintelligible.

It was just at this time, moreover, that especially in Italy new means of

Hydraulie organ; reconstitution by Perrault, after Vitruvius. 1684. By Leclerc.



Abraham Bosse: The Sense of Hearing. One of a series devoted to the five senses. An informal gathering of amateurs; five singers accompanying themselves on the lute and bass viol.

expression were being eagerly sought. These researches were not confined to musicians, for the latter had occasion to compare their views with those of poets, philosophers and learned men in the Academies and clubs where all the arts and all branches of science were freely discussed. While the Accademia di Platone, founded in Florence in 1470 by Marsile Ficin, was mainly devoted to philosophy, Lorenzo the Magnificent had, at about that time, endowed the capital of the Medicis with a centre of learning with a wider outlook to which musicians were admitted. Institutions of this kind soon sprang up everywhere. In Bologna, Rome, Milan, Verona, Mantua, etc., the following Academies opened their doors: the Filarmonici, the Filomusi, the Floridi,

Anthoyne Boesset: Court airs. Dialogue between shepherds and the stars. 1621. (The voice part is written in normal notation; accompaniment in lute tablature).



the Arcadi, the Invaghiti, etc. In 1603 Monteverdi dedicated his Fourth book of madrigals to the Intrepidi of Ferrara.

As to the fruitful results of the exchanges of ideas which were made possible by such gatherings, we have the testimony of Caccini, one of the creators of opera. He used to say that his understanding of music was less the result of thirty years study of counterpoint than of the learned discussions which took place at the famous Camerata which used to meet in Florence at the house of Giovanni Bardi, Count of Vernio.

This was the meeting-place of poets and scientists with a passion for music, such as Ottavio Rinuccini and Vincenzo Galileo, the father of the illustrious astronomer, as well as of professional musicians like Jacopo Peri, and Giulio Caccini, both of them singers and composers, Girolamo Mei, the theoretician, and other less well-known personalities.



Claudio Monteverdi: Orfeo. Title-page. Venice, 1609. Monteverdi's masterpiece, first performed at Mantua February 24, 1607, was published two years later in Venice.

Their main purpose was to return to the straightforward and unencumbered art of the Greeks as they imagined it through Greek literature. They were obsessed by the idea of song accompanied simply on the lyre-probably confusing the bardic instruments with the lira da gamba, which was a sort of big viol played with a bow with far richer potentialities than its ancient namesake, the strings of which were plucked. Galileo, who had begun by composing polyphonic music, came to look upon it as a barbarous invention: "Why cause words to be sung by four or five voices so that they cannot be distinguished, when the Ancients aroused the strongest passions by means of a single voice supported by a lyre? We must renounce counterpoint and different kinds of instruments and return to primitive simplicity." The object was to set against the science of the polyphonic composers a living art, supple and individualist, but at the same time subservient to the poem; instead of disregarding or diminishing its intensity of expression, the music ought to increase it. This, in fact, was Monteverdi's avowed aim in his Scherzi musicali of 1607: "L'orazione sia padrona dell'armonia e non serva" (the text should be the master and not the slave of the music). It should be said, however, that he soon realized the narrowness of this conception, and restored to music her prerogatives whenever he felt that the words alone were not enough.

In its incisive fashion Monteverdi's dictum only echoed what had been spoken and written since Galileo's Dialogo della musica antica e della moderna (1581), and above all since the sensational preface to Caccini's Nuove musiche (1602). It was the precise definition of the stile recitativo or rappresentativo (which were practically identical) but considered from the dual point of view of, on the one hand, vocal technique, i.e. recitation, or declamation, modelled on the inflexions of the spoken word, or, on the other, of the effect it was desired to obtain, i.e. the representation or suggestion of all the human passions and all the spiritual emotions that language can express. Galileo

Claudio Monteverdi. Score of Orfeo.

tried to do this in three compositions, unfortunately lost, of which the subjects were Ugolino's poignant lament in the 33rd Canto of Dante's Inferno, the lamentations in the Responsory for Holy Week, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah. All this was leading directly to a dramatic style which, for some time to come, was to seek inspiration from similar 'pathetic' sources.

In any case these experiments were destined to find a formal framework to which they suited: the opera. It was all the more inevitable in that other tentatives were moving in the same direction, although no one had any clear notion as to where all this was leading: on the one hand there were the many passages in the pastorales from Tasso's Aminta that called for musical support; on the other there were the musical interpolations known as intermedii which were a sort of interlude played during the entracte of a comedy, but not having necessarily any connection with the subject of the piece, and often consisting of madrigals with a solo voice, choruses and ballets.

We must also take into account the dramas and comedies in which music, in the form of song or dance, played an episodic part. The next step was to undertake works in which the whole text would be set to music. This was attempted in 1592 by Emilio de' Cavalieri (c. 1550-1602), a Roman gentleman who had come to Florence as Master of the Revels at the Tuscan Court, and



took the form of two short pastorales in one act, 'recited with music' before a select audience with immediate success, and entitled respectively Il Satiro and La disperazione di Fileno. Cavalieri was able to express pathos or comedy with sufficient conviction to draw tears from, or arouse the hilarity of, his audience. He also had a singularly clear conception of the true nature of musical drama, of the way in which it should be presented, of the size and disposition of the theatre (he was in favour of an invisible orchestra), of the duties of the soloists and chorus and of the need for variety throughout the production, both as regards the choice of costumes and the balance between solo and chorus numbers and singing and dancing.

The same year, 1592, Count Bardi having left Florence, the Camerata met at the house of Jacopo Corsi, an amateur poet and musician, and it was there, at this time precisely, that the idea of dramma per musica first took shape and was put into practice. Rinuccini, an artist of refinement and keen intelligence, who was the most active member of the group, entered into collaboration with the composer Jacopo Peri. With him he sought to perfect a form of recitative half way between song and speech. The result of this collaboration, Dafne, of which unfortunately only the libretto has survived, was performed in 1597 and was so successful that it was revived in 1598 and 1599, and the Grand Duke

of Tuscany, on the occasion of the marriage of his daughter Marie de Medicis to Henri IV, commissioned Rinuccini and Peri to write a new lyrical work: this was Euridice, produced in Florence on October 6, 1600, before an audience of crowned heads, including some musicians of whom Monteverdi was one. This met with even greater success than Dafne, and was looked upon as a resuscitation of Greek tragedy. Rinuccini and Peri had, indeed, created a new art-form which bore within it, for good or bad, the seeds of the lyrical drama of the future. Their achievement met with a mixed reception; some congratulated them for having accomplished a definite step forward in the direction of truth (foreshadowing what Gluck, Wagner and Debussy were to achieve much later), while others reproached them for having abandoned the conquests of counterpoint.

These first attempts no doubt seemed poor in comparison with what had preceded them in the more purely musical field of the great polyphonists, Lasso, Josquin des Prez and Palestrina. Peri's recitative is still very awkward and rudimentary, but the innovators of the year 1600 prepared the way for so many masterpieces that it would be unfair to judge them merely on immediate results with which, moreover, we are imperfectly acquainted in view of the enormous margin allowed for interpretation which it is impossible for us to reconstitute.

Connected with the revolution in the theatre which had its origin in the Florentine artists' coteries is a work which preceded by a few months Peri's Euridice, and which musical historians have found very difficult to classify: this was the Rappresentazione



Monteverdi with his bass viol. Italian, 17th cent. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.

di anima e di corpo by Emilio de' Cavalieri, produced in Rome in February 1600 in the Oratory of Santa Maria in Valicella, designed by Saint Philip of Neri. The spirituality of the subject (a dispute between the body and the soul) and the place where it had its first performance would seem to justify the label Oratorio. For this was the name given to large-scale compositions of a sacred or contemplative character intended, as a rule, to be performed, as in the concert-room, without any stage trappings. There were, it is true, exceptions, especially at the beginning. Some oratorios were performed like operas, although in less spectacular fashion and in a more restrained style that forbade, for example, all 'live' dialogue; but Cavalieri's work was sumptuously mounted with rich costumes, scenery depicting heaven and earth and hell, and a ballet. On the other hand, the dramatic conception was not very different from that of Euridice: there was the same system of continuous recitative, in stile rappresentativo interspersed with vocal solos (canzonette spirituali) and choirs singing in vertical harmony. The orchestra was arranged in the same way, at the back of the stage, and consisted of instruments all of which were capable of improvising their parts from the figured bass—the first example of which happens to occur in this very Rappresentazione di anima e di corpo. (A non-figured basso continuo is to be found already in a motet by Alessandro Striggio, dated 1587).







Gerard van Honthorst: Concert (chitarrone and lute). 1624. Paris, Louvre.

■ Title-page of Theatrum Instrumentorum by Michael Praetorius (Wolfenbüttel. 1620). Church music with orchestra and choir. In the gallery on the left: a small organ, two viols and a violone (bass viol) and a singer who is beating time, taking his cue from the choirmaster below (centre). In the right-hand gallery, a positive organ, three curved cornets and a singer beating time; below, the great organ, two trombones, four singers and the choirmaster.

We are then, here, in the presence of an opera—an opera of an edifying nature, like the *Eumelio* of Agazzari just mentioned, or the *San Alessio* by Stefano Landi, but still an opera rather than an oratorio, as we shall see when we come to examine this form later on. For we have first to consider an event of the greatest importance: the actual creation of lyrical drama due to an innovator of genius, Monteverdi.

#### Monteverdi

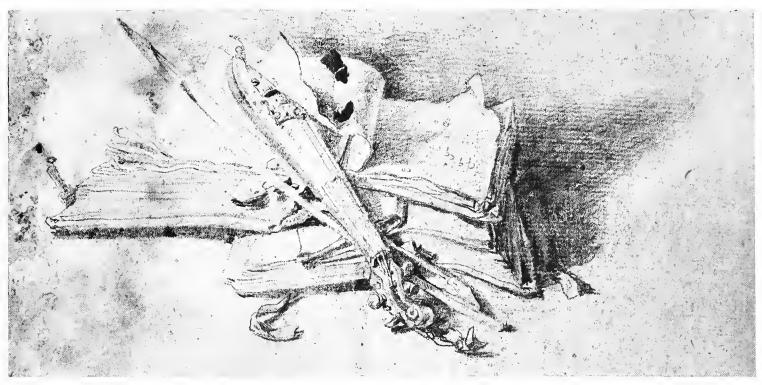
Born at Cremona on May 13 or 14, 1567, Claudio Monteverdi had been the pupil of Marc Antonio Ingegneri before entering the service in 1589 of the Dukes of Mantua as a singer and performer on the viol. In 1601 he became the musical director of the ducal chapel, a post which gave him little satisfaction



and from which he retired without regrets in 1613 to take up a similar appointment in Venice, where he died on November 29, 1643.

He started very young on his career as a composer—a career which was to prove extraordinarily fruitful, not so which enables them to be accompanied on the harpsichord or theorbo; the madrigal in seven parts, *Presso un fiume* tranquillo, already exhibits features characteristic of the Cantata for several voices and of its near synonym the Oratorio, i.e. an instrumental contribuit, and is silent when the protagonists begin to sing.

The Combattimento di Tancredi e di Clorinda (1624) is really a cantata, although not specifically described as such; in it Monteverdi describes in the most moving accents the story from



Dutch School, 17th cent.: A dancing-master's fiddle lying on a score. Drawing. Paris, Louvre. Derived from the medieval rebec, this little instrument was most popular in France under Louis XIV and Louis XV. It was for the "pochette", as it was called, that Lully composed the famous Minuet from Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.

much on account of the number of his works, which was imposing but not exceptional in his day, but for the way in which he enriched every form of music he touched, not only from the point of view of technique but still more from the standpoint of expression. His first books of madrigals are still in the polyphonic style, but the discords he introduced into them, the free rhythms and authentic accentuation were more characteristic of the Florentine revolution with whose aims he lost no time in identifying himself. It should be noted, incidentally, if only to prevent the reader from taking an over-simplified view of musical evolution, that a Master gifted with a particularly keen dramatic sense, Orezio Vecchi, remained faithful to the old style of madrigal; not only did he in his Amfiparnasso of 1594 entrust the expression of the sentiments entertained by the characters in this 'commedia harmonica' to a choir of five voices, but he did the same thing again, after the success of Peri's Euridice, in his Veglie di Siena of 1604.

In 1606 the sixth book of Monteverdi's madrigals included a basso continuo

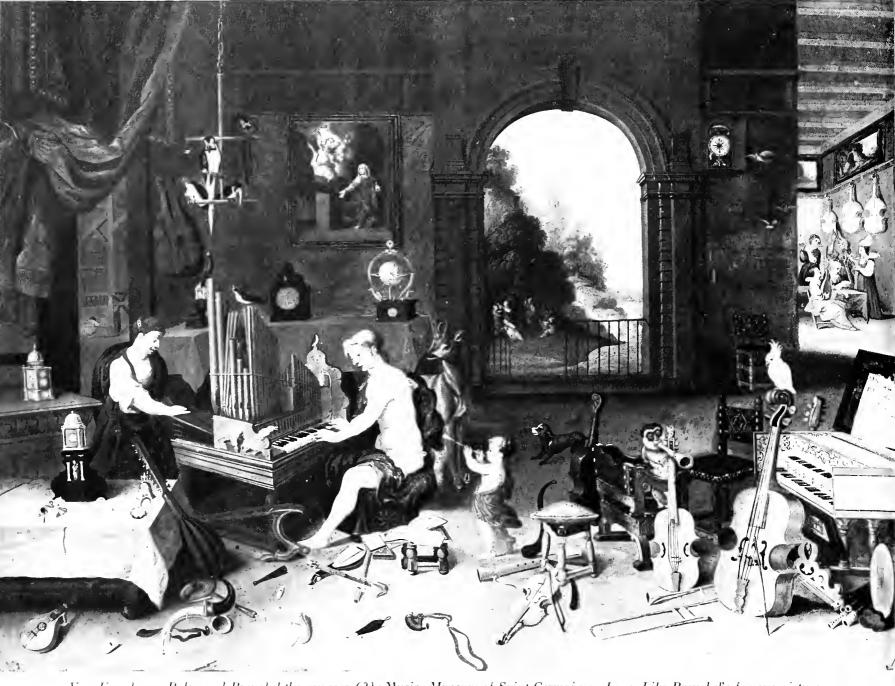
◆ Agostino Agazzari: Del sonare sopra'l basso con tutti li stromenti. Treatise on the basso continuo, Siena, 1607. tion, alternating solos and duets, and a chorus which performs a function similar to that of the chorus in Greek tragedy, which is now that of a narrator; it tells the story, or comments on



Tasso's Gerusalemme liberata in which the hero fights a duel with the heroine disguised in a knight's armour. Here the chorus is replaced by a narrator (in Italian, testo); on the other hand, a string orchestra, which has an important descriptive part to play, is added to the instrument entrusted with the continuo. The style is intensely emotional, a most unusual feature in a cantata, which was a quite recent creation and originally purely lyrical.

Of the Cantate ed arie a voce sola of Alessandro Grandi, the first ones published under this title in 1620 were simply concert arias in strophic form, with the bass repeating itself in each strophe, while the upper part changed from one verse to another. But the old musical terminology (at least up to the end of the eighteenth century) is vague and accommodating; the word cantata will continue to be used to designate all kinds of vocal compositions related to the solo canzonetta long after it had become in essence a kind of miniature drama enacted by several characters (sometimes, but rarely, only one) in which, however, as in the theatre, arias and recitatives followed one another.

Neck of a theorbo (bass lute). 17th cent. instrument. The Hague, Municipal Mus.



Van Kessel, van Balen and Breughel the younger (?): Music. Museum of Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Like Breughel's famous picture, The Sense of Hearing in the Prado, this allegory illustrates the instruments in use at the time: "cistre" (a kind of mandoline with 4-12 strings), primitive horn, theorbo, harp, organ, lute, "pochette", viols, trombones, flûte à bec, harpsichord, drum, etc.

Were it not for the limitations of space, it would be possible to study in Monteverdi the whole range of expression of which secular song is capable, from the agreeable and restrained lyricism of the canzonetta to the emotional tension of the Combattimento. But we will leave on one side this part of his output, as well as his sacred music (masses, motets, litanies, etc., although these would be quite sufficient in themselves to ensure the fame of any composer and turn now to the sphere in which his great gifts expressed themselves most convincingly and with the greatest efficiency; that of opera.

Orico, his first attempt in this form, rises at once to heights which could not have been foreseen from either the Luridice of Peri or Cavalieri's Rappre-

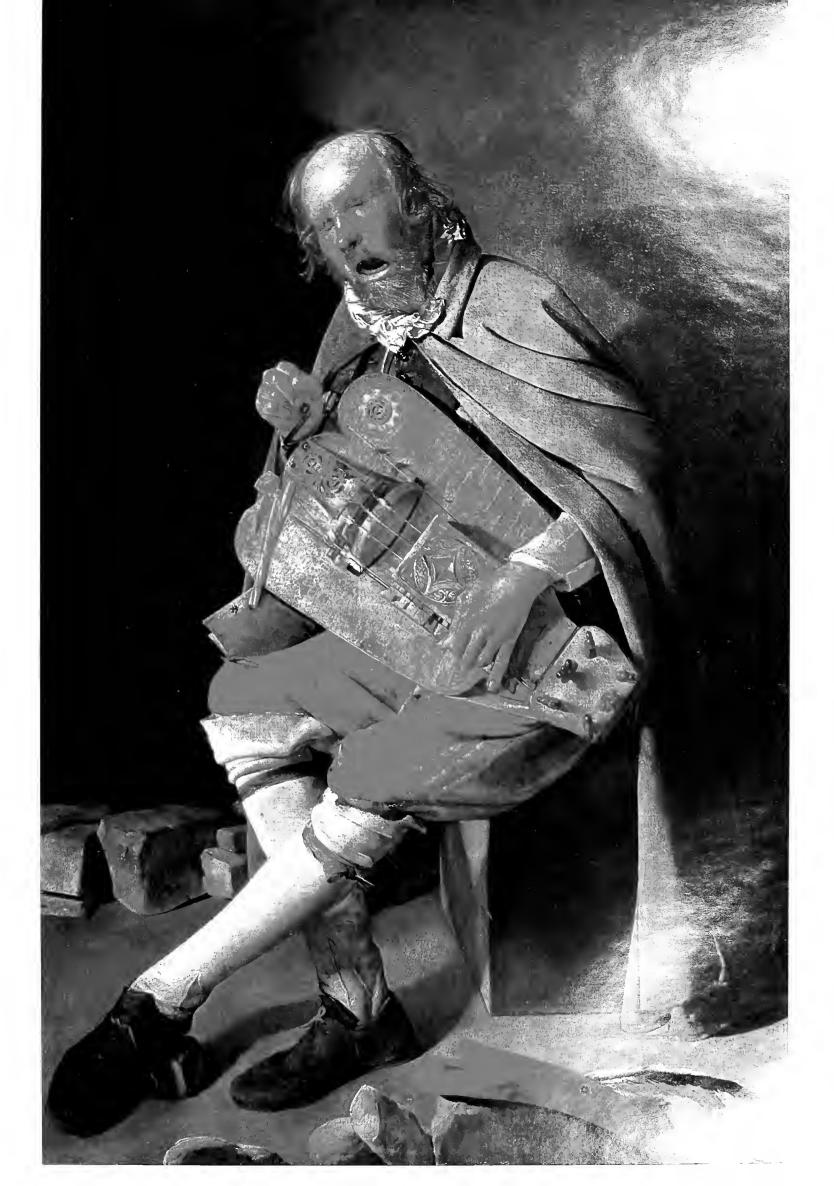
sentazione di anima e di corpo. Everything that existed in germ in the works of the Florentine reformers now comes to full maturity. And to this must be added another factor which seems to defy the laws of evolution and upset all the convenient theories of the historians—genius, which alone, in the last analysis, can explain not only Orfeo, but Tristan and Isolde, Boris Godunov and Pelléas et Mélisande.

Composed on a libretto by Alessandro Striggio, Orfeo was produced on February 24, 1607, semi-privately, at the palace of the Dukes of Mantua before a most appreciative audience. On examining the score it is impossible not to be struck immediately by the extraordinary range of expression varying from the luminosity of the opening scenes to

the sombre horror which follows the narration of the female Messenger.

The contrasting situations were matched by the mobility of the dramatic declamation. The madrigal, a medium which Monteverdi had raised to the same pitch of perfection as Marenzio and Gesualdo, had, as it were, brought him to the threshold of dramma per musica. The Messenger's narration, or again the poignant lament Lasciate me morire, the sole fragment that remains of the opera Arianna, written immediately after the production of Orfeo when the composer had suffered a cruel bereavement, are a revelation of his extraordinary powers of expression and

Georges de La Tour: The hurdy-gurdy 
player. Oil painting. Nantes Museum.





ability to convey a personally experienced emotion in terms which, in spite of all the revolutions in the history of musical drama, still ring true.

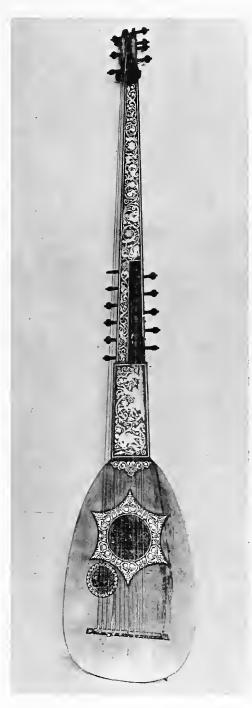
He was also at his ease in handling comic scenes. His last opera, the Incoronazione di Poppea written for Venice in 1642 (all that remains, with Orfeo and Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in patria, of a dramatic production which we know was very considerable but which has unfortunately disappeared) contains scenes where the page, the maid-servant and the sentinels express themselves with a verve which has lost nothing of its savour. Indeed, in the air all in half-tints like that of the page: Sento un certo non so che it is possible to see more than a similarity of situation with the Voi che sapete of Mozart's Cherubino with which it is often compared. L'Incoronazione di Poppea, although less well known than Orfeo, would have a very good chance of taking first place among the works of Monteverdi if the general public were ever given an opportunity of hearing it. In this drama, which is no longer mythological but historical, Monteverdi's gifts of observation, and powers of expression are seen at their best. And despite the fact that he only left the barest indications for the orchestration, the quality of his declamation, his harmonics and his rhythms is enough to create the emotional atmosphere.26

### Roman opera

Between the composition of Orfeo and L'Incoronazione di Poppea Monteverdi had seen considerable changes taking place in opera which were mainly due to the influence of musicians working for Rome. Recitative was giving way to a freer use of melody, either in the form of arias, songs or ariosi sung in chorus (the arioso was a kind of intermediary between the recitative and the aria: it was a recitative of a more definitely melodic character, or an aria not confined to a fixed symmetrical pattern). At the same time, the visual aspect—scenery, stage management, etc., became tremendously important. Opera tended to become "a concert given with splendid scenery, a great feast for the senses, an enchantment for the eye no less than for the ear.'

The principal figures of the Roman school were Domenico Mazzocchi, Stefano Landi, author of a San Alessio (1632) which links up with Cavalieri's sacred drama and of which, paradoxi-

Nicolas de Largillière: Adelaïde de Gueidan and her sister. Oil painting, showing a harpsichord with two keyboards. Aix-en-Provence, Granet Museum. cally enough, the best parts are the comic episodes, and, last but not least, Marco Marazzoli, a famous harpist and singer, and Luigi Rossi (1598-1653). The latter's opera Il Palazzo incantato d'Atlante had such a great success in 1641 that Mazarin invited the composer



Chitarrone (Archlute). 17th cent. Paris, Collection of the Conservatoire Museum.

to produce his *Orfeo* in Paris. On a libretto by the Abbé Butti, Luigi Rossi had written an admirable score. The novel harmonies, with their great evocative power, resemble those of Monteverdi, especially in the treatment of dissonance and methods of modulation. The orchestration and the way the chorus is employed show imagination no less than technical mastery. But Luigi Rossi was a famous singer, as Peri,

Caccini and Monteverdi had been before him; and this would account for the particular attention he pays to the voice and his skill in using it to the best effect. His recitatives have the vivacity of the spoken word, and are sometimes amplified to become a vehicle for the expression of emotion; in his solo songs, duets and trios he varies the melodic patterns of the arioso, changing to those of the song with a refrain, or a strophic aria, or one of the da capo type. Rossi's Orfeo was certainly one of the chief stimulants which led to the creation some twenty years later of a French national opera.

The Roman school must also be credited with the first opéra-bouffes, which were a natural sequel to the comic episodes interpolated for the sake of contrast in 'serious' operas, like the San Alessio of Landi or Monteverdi's L'Incoronazione di Poppea. It was Marco Marazzoli who prepared the way, with his Chi soffre speri (1639) in collaboration with Mazocchi, and Dal male il bene, in collaboration with Abbatini. The recitativo secco (recitative accompanied on the harpsichord with, at most, one stringed instrument for the bass, in order to ensure the most

turns into a quasi parlando, for the sake of a humorous effect.

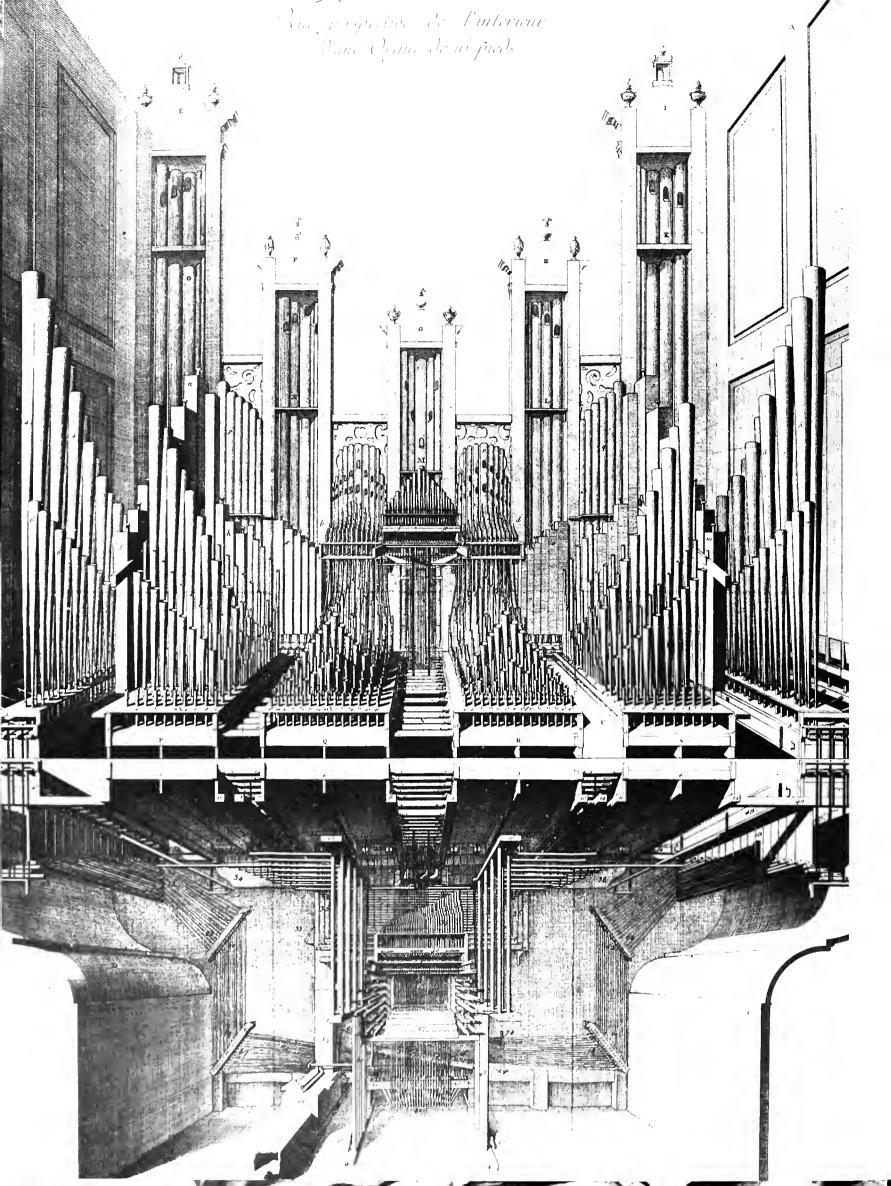
# Venice and the first public opera-houses

rapid delivery of voluble speech) is

a current feature in these, and sometimes

It was in Venice that opera first emerged from the restricted circles in which it began and was presented to the general public. In March 1637 the San Cassiano theatre was the first to open its doors to a paying public drawn from all classes of society. The inaugural production was entrusted to a Roman company which gave Francesco Mannelli's Andromeda, on a libretto by Benedetto Ferrari. But the Venetian librettists and composers were not slow to take up the challenge. Soon, out of the 16 theatres open in the Serene Republic five or six were given up to operatic companies during the three main seasons of the year: winter, or Carnival, spring, or Ascension, and the autumn months.

The lyric theatres nearly all belonged to the aristocracy who ran them generally at a loss for their own amusement. However the behaviour of the public in the theatres was far from aristocratic. A German architect, a certain Herr von Uffenbach who was a very keen observer, had proof of this when in 1715 he attended a performance in the theatre of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, the





Peter Claez: Still life with musical instruments. Paris, Louvre.

most luxurious and the most famous in the city. From his seat in the parterre, underneath the boxes occupied by the nobility and the rich burghers of the city, he was astonished to see the stage bombarded with potato and orange peel, and even spat at!

This disorderly behaviour contrasted strangely with the luxurious mise-enscene. In Venetian opera the plot, invariably complicated by stratagems, elopements, disguises, etc., always depended largely on fantastic effects: apparitions of marine monsters, deities descending from the skies, flying and dancing horses, mountains opening up to disclose a palace or a prison. The scene-painters, Jacopo Torelli and his colleagues, were no less important in the eyes of the public than the librettist and the composer. But we must not on that account under-estimate the intrinsic musical value of the Venetian opera. Claudio Sartori has enumerated 358 operas performed between 1637 and the end of the seventeenth century. And among the composers, the most bril-

■ "Interior view of a 16 foot organ."

Engraving from "L'Art du Facteur d'Orgue", a treatise on organ construction, by Dom Bedos de Celles. Paris, 1765-1778.

liant were Monteverdi (with L'Incoronazione di Poppea and how many more masterpieces that have disappeared!), Francesco Cavalli, Marc-Antonio Cesti, Marc-Antonio and Pierandrea Ziani, Carl Francesco Pollarolo.

Of these, after Monteverdi, the most forceful and original was his disciple Francesco Cavalli (1602-1676), the author of 42 operas, 28 of which have survived, the others being known to us only through their librettos. The scores which have been preserved reveal a genius less refined and subtle than Monteverdi, but obviously made for the theatre, especially the Venetian theatre. His art was par excellence of the type that appealed to the new public for 'opera for everyman'; popular, vigorous, straightforward, clear and well-fitted to depict strongly defined characters; it was an art capable of rising to the heights of tragedy, but could also, if necessary, lend itself to a portrayal of the irresistibly comic.

Almost a generation younger than Cavalli, Marc-Antonio Cesti (1623-1669) brought to Italian music a melodic sense impregnated with a sensual beauty which already foreshadows the art of the eighteenth century. It has been customary to contest Cesti's having

belonged to a Venetian school of music. The truth is that Cesti, who was born at Arezzo and died in Florence and was all his life a great traveller, owed as much to Luigi Rossi as to Monteverdi and Cavalli; but it was at Venice that his Orontea had a triumphant success, while the opera Il Pomo d'Oro which was no less successful in Vienna in 1667, is in the direct line of the Venetian 'fairy-play' tradition. Any extended study of the history of opera would, moreover, have to take account of a whole branch of the Venetian school working at the Imperial Austrian Court in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. with Marc-Antonio Ziani and Antonio Caldara, as well as certain northern Italian masters, such as Antonio Bertali and Antonio Draghi, who were working on very similar lines.

### Cantata and oratorio

While opera continued to extend its sway (and we shall see that it was not long before it crossed the frontiers of its native land), new developments were taking place outside the theatre in



the sphere of vocal music, some forms of which, while benefiting from the progress of dramatic music, were at the same time enriching the latter on a reciprocal basis. It was normal in Italy at that time to write all kinds of music; hence we find distinguished operatic composers like Mazocchi, Cesti, Luigi Rossi also writing cantatas. It was to Rossi that the cantata owed its complete emancipation as regards the number of movements, their type-airs, ariosi, recitatives, duets or trios-the general tonal scheme, the ornamentation of the melodies, the richness of the harmony and range of expression. He has set to admirable music texts which sometimes attain the limits of bad taste but which are made tolerable by the magic of his art and the soaring inspira-

tion of his melody.

His successors, Bassani, Bononcini, Alessandro Scarlatti and, outside Italy, Hasse, Graun and Handel enriched the instrumental forces by adding violins, flutes or oboes to the instruments responsible for the continuo, and by increasing the length of the ritornelli; the cantata, whether one approves or not, was to contribute more than anything else to the transformation of the dramma per musica into opera of a predominantly lyrical nature in which the soloists, whether castrati or prime donne, were to assume an exaggerated importance, often to the detriment of the music.

Another form was developing at the same time as the cantata—the oratorio—a rather ill-defined species, as we saw in the case of the Rappresentazione di anima e di corpo: it was as a rule of religious inspiration, but was often enlivened by love scenes. It can even have an entirely non-religious subject, like Handel's Herakles, Haydn's Seasons or Stravinsky's Oedipus Rex.

The primitive oratorio dates back to the sixteenth century and developed from the laude which were sung in Rome in the oratori, which were prayer-houses founded by St. Philip of Neri. These laude, which had a very simple polyphonic texture, were sometimes cast in the form of a dialogue between two groups of singers to give them more expression, in much the same way as had been done with the tropes in the tenth century. Until the Florentine 'melodramatic' revolution, fashion favoured these narrations in the form of a dialogue on Biblical stories in the style of the secular madrigal. Starting with the Rappresentazione di anima e di corpo a certain number of oratorios were really religious operas. The others perpetuated, but in a modernised form, the tradition of the laude, which were of a spiritual nature and intended to be performed

■ Carlo Saraceni: Saint Cecilia and the Angel (lute and bass viol). Oil painting. C. 1610. Rome, Galerie Nationale.

without recourse to any visual aids. The Teatro Armonico Spirituale by Francesco Anerio (1619) was the first example of the perfected form: the chorus announces the subjects in madrigal style and then gives place to the protagonists who sing solo in the style of recitative. Sometimes a narrator takes over from the chorus the role of commentator which later on will be specially reserved for him. Henceforward the chorus will have other duties-either to reflect the feelings of the audience, like the ancient Greek chorus, or to amplify those of the characters, or else to produce descriptive effects and conjure up pictures of a battle or a tempest or an orgy. Oratorios were composed on a text in the vernacular or on Latin words taken from the Bible.

The greatest composer of Latin oratorio in the seventeenth century was Giacomo Carissimi (1605-1674). The Roman church musicians remained for the most part faithful to the old polyphonic style; the immensity of St. Peter's in Rome, completed only a few years prior to 1630, encouraged them to compose works for five or six choirs. Carissimi adopted a sober and straightforward style, concentrating on the melodic line, the organization of tonal planes and clarity of form rather than on contrapuntal refinements.

After Carissimi, oratorio was strongly influenced by opera which in turn had become a sort of extended cantata in which the recitative was only employed as a succinct transition between the ariosi, da capo arias, and vocal duets, trios and quartets. The chorus was practically eliminated in the oratorios of Alessandro Stradella, Antonio Draghi, Alessandro Scarlatti, Legrenzi and Giovanni Bononcini, while the instrumental element was developed in symphonic episodes and in airs for violins or oboe obbligato which introduced into the church those contests of virtuosity between voices and instruments which were becoming increasingly popular in the theatre. It was only with Handel that the chorus was reinstated with all its former prerogatives.

The last thirty years of the seventeenth century were marked, as far as the history of opera is concerned, by another shift in the centre of interest from Venice to Naples and by the large-scale exportation of Italian operas abroad and the emergence of national operas which were springing up one after another in almost all the principal countries of Europe. In Venice itself, where instrumental music was beginning to be developed on a large scale, lyric drama was being supplanted by lavishly produced fantastical "panto-mimes" in which the scene-painters and inventors of the machinery for "apparitions" and other stage effects had

relegated the composer and librettist to the background. The best musicians were either working for foreigners, or had gone abroad. I have already mentioned a few in Vienna where Leopold I had founded an Italian theatre where more than 400 new works were produced in half a century. There were others, no less important, working in Munich, Dresden and Hanover; among these was the curious figure of Agostino Steffani (1654-1728), organist, choir-master, priest, ambassador and titular bishop who, in spite of continuous travel and diplomatic missions, wrote a score of operas as well as church music, madrigals and the duetti da camera for two voices and bass for which he is famous.

### Neapolitan opera

During this same period it was Naples, where there had been no opera before 1651 (l'Incoronazione di Poppea), which was to steal a march on the musicodramatic centres of Northern Italy. It started on a modest scale. At first the repertory was the same as, or a faithful copy of the Venetian repertory. Up to the time of Alessandro Scarlatti's first opera, produced in 1679, there is only one Neapolitan worthy of mention, Francesco Provenzale (c. 1627-1704), author of eight operas of which the two that have survived, Stellidaura vendicata and Lo schiavo di due moglie, are in the direct line of Luigi Rossi and Cesti. Alessandro Stradella (born Montefestino 1642, died Genoa 1682), whose connection with Naples is slight, is no longer considered to belong to the Neapolitan school. Moreover, although his dramatic scores, especially La forza del amor paterno, recently republished, are rich in substance and could easily be produced in the theatre, they are less original than his cantatas, and particularly his instrumental music, as we shall see when we come to the concerto grosso.

The really outstanding figure and undisputed master of the Neapolitan school was Alessandro Scarlatti (Palermo 1660, Naples 1725) a creator whose fertility is all the more astonishing in that it is accompanied by a constant preoccupation with form and style. He wrote several hundred works of sacred or religious inspiration, masses, psalms, motets, oratorios; nearly 700 cantatas; instrumental music for organ, harpsichord and strings (the 4 Sonate a quattro occupy an important place in the history of the string quartet); and about 115 operas which, somewhat unjustly, have claimed the attention of numerous historians to the detriment of the rest of his enormous output.



La Hyre: Music (chitarrone) 37" - 5334". New York, Metropolitan Museum.

These operas have certainly very great qualities and, to begin with, that of exhibiting a constant progression towards a deeper dramatic feeling, more recondite harmonies, a richer and more ingenious orchestration in which the treatment of the various instruments is better and better adapted to their individual natures in each successive work. In certain airs as in Mitridate Luputore, for example where a solo journ is coupled with a singer, the or calls for a much higher degree nervo its than was required in the ed concertos of that time, on-idered as a whole, from ies of dramatic action, and as owing to the meet, idels of a public In the their progress, concentrated on

the airs, linked together by a rudimentary recitative secco. Even the form of the air was finally restricted to a uniform da capo type (ABA) in which the return of the opening section provided the solo soprano or prima donna with an opportunity to embroider and improvise whatever cadences she pleased.

As a just reprisal, it was Scarlatti the symphonist who left his mark most decisively on opera itself by his creation of the 'Italian Overture', sometimes called the 'Neapolitan Overture', of which the first perfected example occurs in Dal male it bene 1681 or 1686; this is a composition in three movements, allegro, adagio, allegro, foreshadowing the plan of the Inture symphony. The balance of this tripartite form is not as perfect as one might be tempted to suppose. The opening allegro is generally

longer and more severe in style. Until fairly late in the classical era it was a rule that every instrumental composition, whether sonata, suite or symphony, must end with a quick, cheerful movement short enough to leave the audience in a cheerful and carefree mood.<sup>27</sup>

### In France; from the Court ballet to Lully's operas

We left theatre music in France at the stage of the first Court ballets in which Baif and his friends were attempting to revive Greek tragedy by combining story, music and dance in a single spectacle. Spoken dialogue, however, was soon abandoned, and the ballet became a suite of dances, pantomimes and *récits* (the *récit* in ballet is not a recitative, but an air or an *arioso* of a more dramatic nature than the Court *air*). <sup>28</sup>

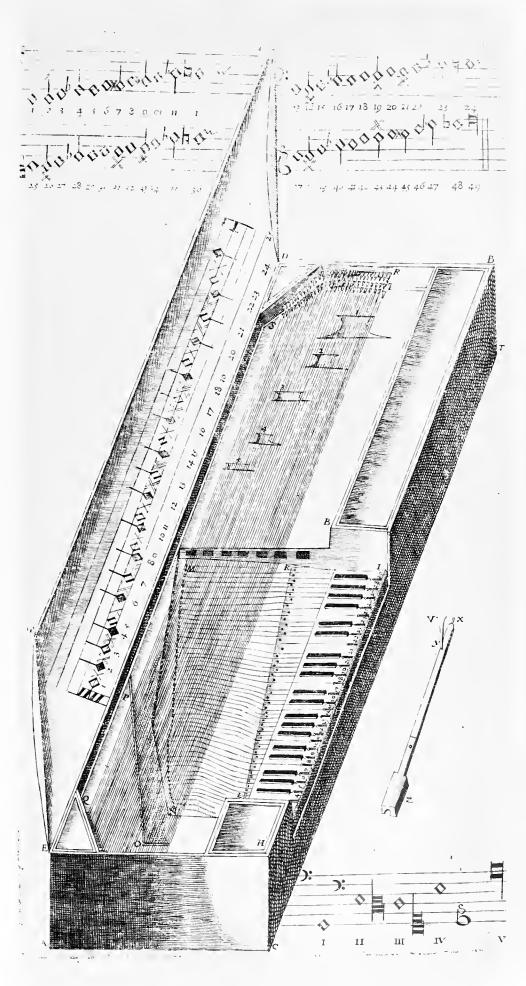
These ballet récits were the work of musicians who were specially distinguished in the composition of Court airs, such as Pierre Guédron, whose music was the most expressive and pointed the way most clearly to the dramatic ballet of the future, Mauduit, Bataille, Boesset, Molinié and Cambefort. As for the dances, they were very often anonymous, or put together by professional composers on themes supplied by the strolling players and buffoons. But the violinists of the "24 Violons du Roy", Mazuel and Bruslard, wrote dance-suites very well suited to their subject. Although their harmony and counterpoint were not very elegant, their melodic invention and attractive rhythms were appreciated by contemporary audiences no less than the brilliant tone and attack of the 24 violins and other similar instrumental groups. While the violin was still out of favour in France, foreign Courts vied with one another to secure the services of the French 'bands' of ballet violinists; and so it is at Cassel and Upsala, and not in Paris, that the most complete collections of dance-suites have been found, usually in four or five parts, not very skilfully arranged, but possessing an irresistible dynamic vitality.

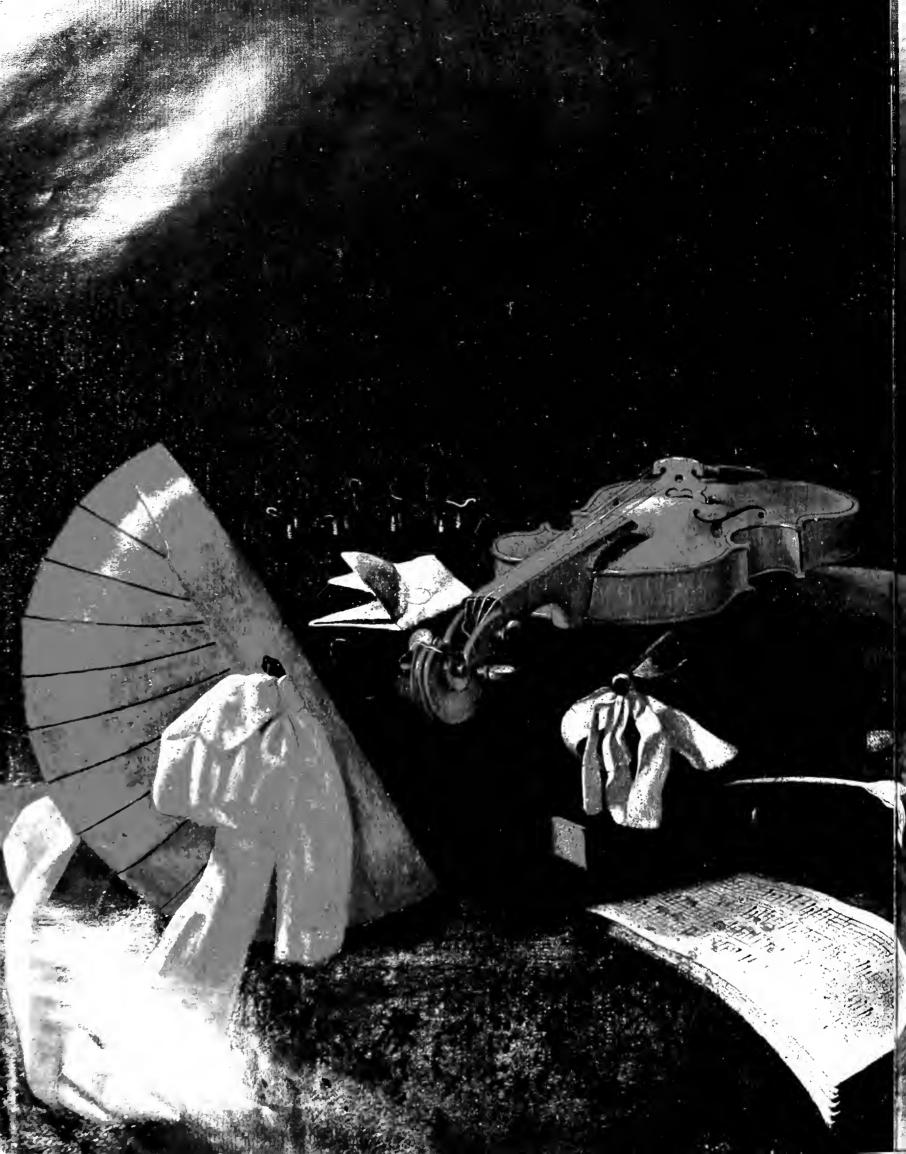
Italian opera, which was in constant progress—at any rate from the point of view of popular success—was bound to affect the future of the French Court Ballet by causing it to become more dramatic and so turn into French national opera, which it eventually did during the second half of the century.

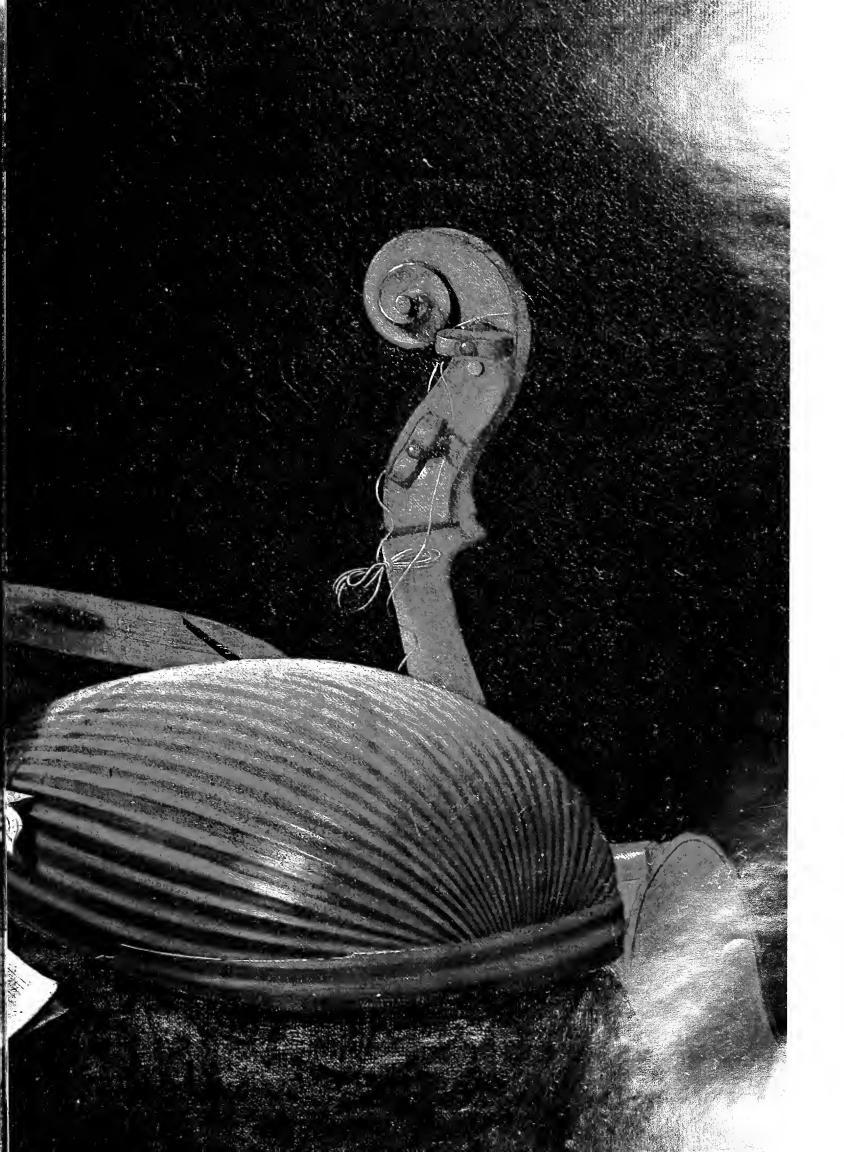
After 1645 Mazarin had encouraged excellent Italian companies to come to Paris where they gave Cavalli's Egisto, Serse and Ercole amante, Luigi Rossi's Orfeo and some lesser works all interpreted by the finest artists. This met with some opposition, but of a very mild kind compared to that which was aroused by Transalpine visitors in the next century. It was mainly a matter of 'principle' based on the difference in national taste, for while the Italians were prone to give free rein to the expression of violent passions and emotions, the French preferred, in the words of Mersenne, to "caress the ear" and to flavour their songs with "a perpetual

Marin Mersenne: Third Book of Universal Harmony (1636-1637): Manichordion (Clavichord).

Pages 88-89: Evaristo Baschenis: Still life with musical instruments. Bergamo, Accademia Carrara.







sweetness so that they lacked energy". French rationalism also revolted against the lack of verisimilitude in a dramatic action that was "sung from beginning to end as if the characters represented were ridiculously endowed with the power to treat the most trivial, as well as the most important affairs in their lives in music." (Saint-Evremond, Les Opéras).

Nevertheless there were French musicians who attempted to compose in the new fashion, and after some tentative experiments, the Abbé Pierre Perrin, a mediocre but enterprising poet, and the organist Robert Cambert (c. 1628-1677) produced a *Pastorale* which they described as "the first French musical comedy (comédie en musique) to be produced in France", it was performed in April 1659 in a private house at Issy, and given later at the Court. The music has been lost, but that of Pomone, a pastoral in 5 acts by the same authors, has been preserved; this was performed at the inauguration of the Académie Royale de Musique on March 3, 1671 where it was played altogether 146 times.

The said Académie had been created under a Royal Charter granted to Perrin "for the production and public performance of operas and other stage presentations with music and verse in the French language similar to those that are given in Italy". But Perrin, loaded with debts, thrown into prison and fleeced by two adventurers, de Sourdéac and Champeron, had no alternative but to hand over his privilege without delay to a very powerful musician at the court of Louis XIV, Jean-Baptiste Lully who, under letters patent dated March 13, 1672, became Director of the Opera.

Born in Florence on November 29, 1632, the son of a miller whom he tried later to pass off as a nobleman, Lully had been brought to France at the age of fourteen to help Mlle. de Montpensier to perfect her knowledge of the Italian language. His musical gifts soon attracted notice, and he was made to take violin lessons; after that he studied composition with Nicolas Metru, Gigault and Roberday. Having left the service the Grande Mademoiselle when he was twenty as the result, it was said, of some impertinent verses in rhyming octosyllables, he became in 1652 one of the King's violenists and, owing to his gifts as a composer, dancer, bulfoon, virtuoso and courtier of exceptional sagacity, it was not long before he had gained the friendship and complete protection of Louis XIV. In 1653 he was appointed Court Composer for instrumental music, in 1661 Superintendent of the King's Music, and in 1672, as we have seen, Director of the Opera. No one in France had ever enjoyed such absolute authority over the whole musical profession. And this position be maintained until his

death, which occurred on March 22, 1687 as the result of a slight injury caused by the heavy baton with which he was conducting a Te Deum for the King's recovery from an illness falling on his foot; gangrene set in and he never recovered. For more than 30 years he had exercized an absolute monopoly over operatic music in France, justifiably no doubt since, short of creating it altogether, he had at least shaped it with enough genius, method and perseverance to ensure the survival of the Lully style and repertory right up to the time of Rameau and Gluck.

In his ballet music he adopted from the beginning the melodic framework and style of French airs and recitatives, only having recourse to Italian turns of phrase for the expression of the more violent manifestations of joy or sorrow. Alone or in collaboration, Lully composed scores of ballets in which the King danced and he himself appeared, now in the guise of a comic or even grotesque personage, now in a poetic and noble role: in the Ballet des Muses (1666) he impersonated Orpheus and played on his violin (disguised as a lyre) a minuet with variations which, with its solo passages alternating with the orchestral tutti, anticipates the spirit of the concerto. He was, moreover, keenly interested in the orchestra. He devised a regular code of performance which did not, as has been sometimes rather too hastily assumed, exclude any ornamentation of the melody, but rather subjected it to a rigorous set of rules which enabled each executant to know exactly what embellishments to add and what bowing would be best suited to certain kinds of melody or certain expressive effects.

It was Lully's collaboration with Molière, and occasionally with other librettists, that gave rise to the Comedy-Ballet, a new form in which Baïf's dream of a complete fusion between the drama, music and dance became a reality. This generic title of Comedy-Ballet covered two distinct categories, one consisting of works closely resembling opera (e.g. La Princesse d'Elide, Les Amants magnifiques, Psyché) and the other of a rather different type in which the music, though less continuous, was used to reinforce the comedy with irresistible effect, thus heralding the opéra-bouffe and, in a more distant future, the true French opéra-comique (cf. Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, l'Amour Médecin, etc.).

Once installed at the head of the Académie Royale de Musique, Lully turned his attention to the scheme outlined in the letters patent of "producing operas on the same lines as, and similar to, those that are given in Italy". On April 27, 1673, he produced his first "tragédie en musique", Cadmus et Her-mione, which was followed by eleven others. But his imitation of Italian models was restricted to the principle of setting the whole drama to music from beginning to end. The spirit of the music is French, as is the form of the arias, songs, dances and choruses. The recitative, modelled on the declamatory style of the great Champmeslé, is absolutely faithful to the genius of the language. Moreover Lully attributed to the orchestra an importance which it had been gradually losing in Italy owing to the tyranny of celebrated singers. His operatic scores necessitate an orchestra of 24 violins (of five kinds, from the dessus to the doublebass) and, in addition, a dozen wind instruments-flutes, oboes and trumpets-and kettle-drums making a total of some forty players; and he uses these forces with such skill that Berlioz quotes examples in his Traité d'Instrumentation.

Finally, it was Lully who endowed French opera with a new form of overture, known as the 'French Overture' which was almost unanimously adopted between 1685, when he first tried it out in the ballet Alcidiane, and round about 1750. It consisted of two sections, one slow and the other fast (lent-vif) after the fashion of the old Venetian overture, but of a more strongly marked and definitely distinctive character. The slow section, in binary rhythm, is firmly accented; very often, too, a third slow section, forming a kind of coda, reintroduces the rhythm, and sometimes even the theme of the opening grave. This type of overture has not only been adopted in numerous foreign operas modelled on the Lully pattern; outside the theatre it was equally successful. Many German composers, including S. Cousser, Johann Joseph Fux, Telemann and many others have written dance-suites of which the first movement is in the form of the French overture. J.S. Bach did the same in his four Suites, or Overtures for orchestra, and even in several of the suites for harpsichord.

Lully's contribution to sacred music, though less important and outstanding than his ballets and operas, is by no means negligible. It combines the characteristics of the French tradition which he was helping to create-majestic, architectural and well-balanced-with the deeper and more essentially religious qualities of a Carissimi.

### Lully of the school of Versailles

Lully practically monopolized the lyric theatre for nearly half a century; to make his position stronger, he had persuaded the King to forbid any theatre other than the Opera to employ



Jan Vermeer: Young girl playing the virginals, C. 1671, Oil painting, London, National callery.



more than two singers and six violins! But his domineering personality also eclipsed for a long time the activities to which, however, he had no objection- of those of this contemporaries who were writing for the Church. It can even be said that he over-shadowed the two or three generations which preceded or followed his own, although recently there have been some sensational rehabilitations among the composers of this period. Today this process is being applied to Nicolas Formé, Bouzignac and Gobert; as regards the Belgian Henry Du Mont (1610-1684), his rehabilitation is now complete. The main effort, which is already proving most rewarding, concerns two masters, in the fullest sense of the word, representing two very different styles and temperaments: Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1634-1704) and Michel Richard Delalande. A pupil of Carissimi in Rome, and later music director to Mlle. de Guise, choir-master at St. Louis des Jésuites and after 1698 at the Sainte-Chapelle, Charpentier composed music for several of Molière's comedies and operas, the most important of which, Médée, was not performed until 1693 some time after the death of Lully, cantatas and drinking songs as well as instrumental music. Of all this abundant production, the greater part consists of sacred works; and those which have been already brought to light are of great beauty.

It is probably in the Histoires Sacrées and the Tragédies spirituelles (Judicium Salomonis, le Sacrifice d'Abraham, l'Enfant Prodigue) which recall Carissimi, that he attains the highest degree of emotional intensity and the most per-

fect form.

Towards the end of his career, M.-A. Charpentier had to face competition from rivals of his own stature. There was, to begin with, Sébastien de Brossard, who is best known as the author of the first French musical dictionary (1703) and a collector of a quantity of sixteenth and seventeenth century works which formed the nucleus of the earliest collections in the Bibliothèque Nationale, but who was also a composer whom it would be wrong to ignore. Others were Jean-François Lalouette, Lully's secretary, who was often entrusted by his master with the 'fillingup' of his scores and was also the author of some masses and motets and a fine Miserere; Nicolas Bernier (1664-1734) who after working in Rome became choir-master at Chartres, and later in Paris at St. Germain-l'Auxerrois and the Sainte Chapelle. He left several collections of sacred and secular music which were never played or read and were considered to be orthodox and respectable but nothing more. The

■ Scenery for Armide (Lully and Quinault).
1686. Engraving by Leclerc, after Bérain.

recent performance at Versailles of one of his motets, however, created something of a sensation on account of its genuine feeling and happy blend of old-fashioned polyphonic technique with a quality of melody that already seems quite modern. Another composer who is now undergoing a similar re-assessment is Michel Richard Delalande (1657-1726) who used to be considered as nothing more than a mere pale imitation of Lully, grandiose and cold, whereas in reality he is, in the direct line of the French tradition, at least the equal of what Charpentier represents in the Italianate school. Lastly there is the case of André Campra (1660-1694) who for a long time was thought to be exclusively an operatic composer whereas his sacred music is quite as fine and quite as important as his

There is every reason to believe that if this History came to be re-published in ten years time it would have to include a much more detailed and circumstantial chapter on this School of Versailles which for a long time had been 'played down' but which, so far as sacred music is concerned, is now seen to be the most important link in the chain that connects the generation of Carissimi and Schütz with that of

Bach and Handel.

## Opera, Lied, and religious music in the Teutonic countries

In Germanic countries opera in the seventeenth century was almost entirely in the hands of the Italians who settled down in permanent companies in the principal music centres. The few German composers who attempted to write operas borrowed the stile recitative from the Florentines except at Hamburg where, in 1678 a permanent theatre was set up which was open to the public and had a German repertory and German artists. The first works to be produced there, the spiritual opera Adam and Eve by Johann Theile (January 2, 1678), the 14 operas of Johann Wolfgang Franck and those of Nikolaus Adam Strungk were in no way remarkable for their originality.

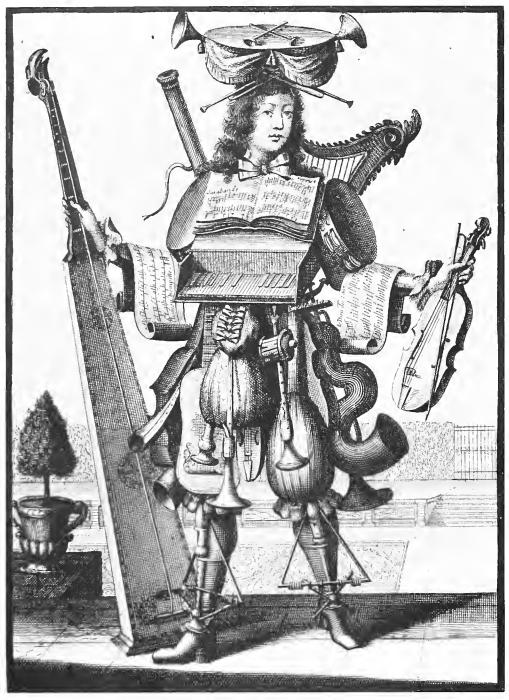
The situation changed with the arrival of Joh. Sigismond Cousser (1660-1726) and Reinhard Keiser (1674-1739). Cousser, who was for eight years a pupil of Lully and his most ardent supporter, wrote operas in an equal mixture of French and Italian styles, but he was also an exceptionally gifted orchestral conductor and in that capacity reorganized the theatre orchestra and chorus and gave successful performances, along with his own works, of the Basilius

which his disciple Keiser had composed at the age of 18 and which had already been well received at the Court of Brunswick. Cousser left Hamburg in 1695. Keiser succeeded him, and in 1702 took over the management of the theatre over which he ruined himself. What is important is that while living an agitated life, often finding himself in a tight corner and on several occasions being obliged to leave Hamburg where his creditors were suing him, he yet contrived to write for this town no less than 116 operas some of which Octavia, Kaiser Justinus, Circe, Almira, Der geliebte Adonis, Janus, Croesus, are masterpieces. Although at first he imitated Lully and the Italians (the influence of Lully being predominant), he succeeded in imparting a German flavour to his recitatives and prepared the way for Bach's recitative arioso. He favoured the aria da capo, saved from monotony by his extraordinary powers of thematic invention.

Keiser also wrote opéra-comiques, such as die Leipziger Messe, der Hamburger Jahrmarkt, der lächerliche Prinz Jodelet, which were the ancestors of the Singspiel which did not begin to be fully developed until the second half of the eighteenth century. His vivacity and lightness of touch gave distinction to a form which was in grave danger owing to the tastes of the Hamburg public which showed a marked preference for a crudely farcical form of entertainment, a kind of puppet show enacted by grotesque characters and live animals, or else for scenes of violence including even capital executions with imitation blood. Even the Störtebecke (1701) by Keiser himself owed its success, it would seem, not so much to its artistic qualities as to its subject—the glorification of a famous local bandit.

Even the Lied, that specifically German form of intimate music combining the simplicity of popular song with the qualities of taste and style that characterize a work of art, owed much to Keiser. A great many of his operatic airs are perfect models of the monodic form of Lied which had succeeded the last polyphonic Lieder of Johann Hermann Schein (1586-1630). Among the masters of the new genre were Johann Staden, Heinrich Albert, and above all Adam Krieger (1634-1666) and Philipp Heinrich Erlebach (1657-1714). J. Wolfgang Franck had transferred the Lied to opera, Cousser had followed his example and so had Keiser-but with just that distinction that separates genius from talent.

The development of sacred music in Germany had largely outstripped that of dramatic music. Already at the beginning of the seventeenth century the German masters, who were still dependent on the foreign schools so far



A Musician's Dress. Engraving of "Grotesque Costumes" by Larmessin. In his right hand the musician holds a "trompette marine" (a kind of one-stringed fiddle, played with a bow); on his arm is the music for trumpet in a sort of rudimentary tablature; on his head a drum; on his back a bassoon and a harp. The violin he is holding already has its modern form; elsewhere are obsolete instruments like the serpent.

as the adoption of new forms was concerned, were distinguishing themselves by the solidity and serious quality of their musical thinking. A case in point is that of Michael Praetorius (1571-1621), author of a considerable quantity of music for all kinds of combinations, more particularly pieces for several choirs singing together on the model of the Venetian school (so far I have only alluded briefly to this technique which I propose to discuss more fully in a later chapter on instrumental music/. His compositions are perhaps less interesting to us than his Syntagma Musicum, a voluminous treatise published between 1615 and 1620, the

first part of which deals with theory, the second with instruments (with an unusual abundance of precise illustrations) while the third describes all the vocal, instrumental and mixed forms then in use. This is the most extensive musical encyclopedia written before the *Harmonie Universelle* of P. Mersenne (1636).

Portrait of J. H. d'Anglebert, engraved by Vermeulen, after Mignard. Opposite page, from left to right: Portrait (anonymous) of Alessandro Scarlatti. Bologna, G. B. Martini Conservatory. Portrait of Michel-Richard Delalande, engraved by Thomassin, after J. B. Santerre. Portrait of J. B. Lully, engraved by Desrochers. To the generation following that of Praetorius belong three very important musicians, all born in Saxony within a year of one another and all three bearing curiously similar names: Schütz, Schein and Scheidt. Their compatriots, in their enthusiasm for alphabetical classifications, have baptized them 'the three big S's.

By far the most important is Heinrich Schütz, born in 1585, a century before J.S. Bach, the only one among the Cantor's predecessors who is almost of the same stature and the first thanks to whom Germany took her place definitely among the great musical countries.

Schütz was originally destined for a legal career, but his musical precocity had impressed the Landgrave Maurice von Hesse-Cassel who sent him to Venice to work with Giovanni Gabrieli. He stayed there until Gabrieli died in 1612. And it was only after his return to Cassel that he decided on a musical career.

In 1614 the Elector of Saxony appointed him choir-master at Dresden where he died in 1672 at the age of 87.

His output was immense, despite the fact that, contrary to the custom of the time, he wrote no instrumental music and no secular vocal music. With the exception of a ballet, Orpheus and Eurydice, and the earliest German opera, Daphne (1627) on a libretto (in translation) by Rinuccini (neither of these scores has survived), he wrote mainly church music: psalms, motets, more than 100 Geistliche Concerte (spiritual concerts) and Symphoniae sacrae in the form of cantatas for one or more voices with chorus and instrumental accompaniment; three Passions on German versions of the Gospels of St. Luke, St. John and St. Matthew; a Historia der Auferstehung (Story of the Resurrection) which introduced into Germany the oratorio form (1623) and was followed 40 years later (1664) by the marvellous Christmas Oratorio (Historia



von der Geburt Christi); in between, about 1645, came the oratorio on the Seven Words from the Cross. Schütz' technique is the product of the knowledge he acquired from the two main Italian sources: Venice where he was initiated by Gabrieli into the art of polyphonic choral writing, and Florence where he learned the stile recitative. In his work the principles of these two schools merged without conflict. In addition to all this he had the German instinct for contrapuntal writing and could draw on the melodic inheritance of German popular song. This eclecticism, however, did not have the consequences that might have been feared. It did not detract in any way from the spontaneity of his invention, the vigour of his style, the pathos or exquisite freshness of his dialogue, or the realism of his descriptive episodes.

It was in the *Passions*, written when he was over 80, that Schütz attained the highest pitch of eloquence; the polyphony is purely vocal; the crowd and the disciples are evoked in the firmly constructed choruses. The Evangelist sings in an unaccompanied monody very similar to Gregorian chant. Schütz has been compared to Monteverdi: although he may not have been so important an innovator, in the nobility and fertility of his inspiration he would seem to be at least his equal.

Neither Johann Hermann Schein (1586-1630) nor Samuel Scheidt (1587-1654) are of the same stature. It has been ingeniously suggested that they were, in a sense, complementary to Schütz in that they wrote in forms that Schütz had neglected; and it is true that in addition to the Cantiones sacrae, spiritual 'concerts' and psalms that both of them produced in abundance, Schein was the author of several collections of polyphonic songs and dance-suites, while Scheidt wrote not only dance-suites but transcriptions of hymns and psalms for the organ and, above all, the three volumes of the Tablatura nova

(1624) which contain a complete series of contrapuntal paraphrases of Protestant *chorals* which prepared the way for the *Choralvorspiel* of J.S. Bach. We shall meet both of these composers again when we come to deal with instrumental music.

### POMONE

O P E R A,

ou

REPRESENTATION EN MUSIQUE

PASTORALE.

Composée par Monsieur PERRIN, Conseiller du Roy en ses Conseils, Introducteur des Ambassadeurs prés seu Monseig<sup>e</sup> le Duc d'Orleans.

Mise en Musique par M' Cambert, Intendant de la Musique de la seuë Reyne.

Et representée par l'Academie des OPERA en Musique en langue Françoise, establie par le Roy sur le pied de celles d'Italie.



A PARIS,

De l'Imprimerie de Pierre Le Mercier, ruë Frementelle, prés le Puits-Certain, au petit Corbeil.

> M. D.C. L.X.X.I. 'Avec Privilege de sa Majesté.

Frontispiece to the libretto of Pomone, pastoral in 5 acts by Cambert, played at the inauguration of the Académie Royale de Musique of Paris, March 3, 1671.

# The English masques and Purcell's operas

In England opera was late in making its appearance. Music occupied a very important place in the Elizabethan theatre; Shakespeare's plays are full of songs and choruses and dancing, but the only form of entertainment in which music played a primordial part were the Masques which perpetuated the French ballet de cour. The only composers of any importance in this sphere were Thomas Campion (1567-1620), Alfonso Ferrabosco, an Englishman of Italian origin, and John Coperario, of purely British descent who changed his name on returning from a period of study in Italy. They wrote music rather in the French style, mainly harmonic in character.

Nicolas Lanier (1588-1666), an artist who for Ben Jonson's *The Masque of Lethe* composed the music, painted the scenery and sang in it himself, introduced to ballet a *recitative* style borrowed from the Florentines. This was also done by Henry and William Lawes. After them the form deteriorated. It was left to Henry Purcell to enrich English music with an operatic masterpiece—*Dido and Aeneas*.

Purcell was born in London in 1659. At the age of ten he became a choir-boy at the Chapel Royal, and at 21 was appointed organist of Westminster Abbey, a post which he held, combining it with other high offices, until his death in 1695. His was a short life, scarcely longer than Mozart's, and almost as productive. His works include: more than 60 dramatic compositions, mainly incidental music, though some have almost the substance of an opera (his only real opera was Dido and Aeneas) 25 Odes and occasional works for voice and orchestra; 9 secular cantatas, 66 anthems, 3 Services, 48 hymns, psalms and other sacred songs, more than 200 secular songs and duets and not far short of 100 pieces of instrumental music...

Purcell, at the beginning of his career, had come under strong French influences. His master Pelham Humfrey had been sent by Charles II to Paris to study under Lully, for the King had shown a marked preference for French music, much to the discontent of many of his subjects. But Purcell did not







altogether approve of this predominance of French taste, represented as it was mainly by dance music which he considered frivolous and superficial. So he turned to Italy where the noblest and most accomplished forms of instrumental music were then in fashion. He must certainly have been acquainted with the duo and trio sonatas of Vitali, Lonati and Nicola Matteis; and though he died before the publication of Corelli's Sonatas for solo violin, Op.V. he was able to profit by the four books of Trios. He had acquired a brilliant and solid technique, although almost his entire output was confined to a period of fifteen years! He often resorts to the grandiose polyphony of the Elizabethan composers. He makes a masterly use of the ostinato bass borrowed from the virginal composers' grounds, not only in his admirable chaconnes, but also in his dramatic arias like the Lament of Dido where the inexorable repetition of the bass figure intensifies the pathos of the melody above; here Purcell reaches the heights of Seneca's sublime funeral march in Monteverdi's l'Incoronazione di Poppea. He can express with equal skill Shakespearian fantasy, whether it be in the graceful mood of the Faery Queen or in descriptions of scenes of wizardry and witches' sabbaths.

In his religious music he easily surpassed the prolific John Blow (1649-1708) his predecessor at the organ of Westminster Abbey. Psalms like his Jehova quam multi sunt are almost without a parallel in the whole repertory of church music.

Finally, he was also the author of some very attractive secular songs for one or several voices and of 53 ingenious and piquant *catches*. 29

## Spain and Portugal: the Zarzuela

In the Iberian Peninsula, though it may be true that in comparison with the 'golden age' of Morales, Victoria and Cabezon, the seventeenth century seemed less brilliant, this does not mean that there were not plenty of good musicians, but, so far as our knowledge of the period extends, there does not seem to be one who can be compared with those giants in originality or creative power. The old polyphony persisted in the works of the contrapuntists of the Valencian school, of whom Juan Bautista Comes (1568-1643) best represents the conservative tendency. Their decadence is revealed in the excessive attention paid to problems of purely scholastic interest, such as writing for several choirs in as many different parts as possible. Musicians of the generation that followed that of Comes, such as Graciano Baban, Urbano de Vargas, etc., modernized his style and rendered it more expressive. A Catalan school grew up round Joan Pujol (1573-1626), and among the musicians of the Abbey of Montserrat, about whom we are only beginning to be at all well documented, the R.P. Joan Cererols (1618-1667) and several others made an important contribution to this school. Among the musicians of Madrid, Mateo Romero (of Flemish descent) and, in Portugal, Joan Rebello deserve more than a brief mention.

As regards the lyric theatre, Spain's contribution in the seventeenth century was the Zarzuela, which derives its name from a royal residence in the neighbourhood of Madrid. Musical performances were given there, and a certain type of opera grew out of them, mixed with a spoken dialogue, thus becoming the ancestor of the French opéra-comique although, like the latter, it was not necessarily confined to 'comedy'. The oldest known composer of zarzuelas is the harpist Juan Hidalgo who wrote several on plays by Calderon—Ni amor se libra de Amor (1640) and Celos aun del aire matan (1660).

# The pre-classical instrumental forms:

sonata, suite, concerto grosso

During the period which saw the rise of opera and oratorio, instrumental music, in freeing itself from the domination of vocal music, created for itself forms which are still current today. The two evolutions, as I have already shown, are inter-connected. The technical and psychological factors which caused the upheaval which led to the birth of lyric drama would account very largely for the genesis of the sonata and its derivatives. But any benefit that instrumental art may have received from the new vocal art as regards expression was fully reciprocated through the stimulus of its own virtuosity and the fact that it actually enriched the other art by means of a larger orchestra and the use of hitherto new and unexploited timbres. These made it possible to suggest or describe dramatic situations with greater fidelity and, in addition, increased flexibility of rhythm and structure.

I would like at this point to explain that as our subject becomes more and more vast as we approach modern times, the less do I intend to attempt to cover it in all its aspects. For the musical historian today finds himself in a very different position vis-a-vis his readers as compared with that of his predecessors only a quarter of a century ago. The radio and the gramophone have transformed into living realities names and works that were then only words, each of which had to be explained before they could be understood. But at this stage much can be omitted, and this I propose to do, if not in regard to the beginning of the seventeenth century, at any rate from the middle onwards, from the time, in fact, when all the main works in the repertory of the period have been recorded.

Origins are, of necessity, confused. This is because every new form is the result of a series of tentative experiments and even when it has attained its maturity it is liable to be much less stable than the text-books, which are obliged to generalize, would have us believe. Composers too, up to the classical era, are incredibly careless in their terminology. Thus they apply the terms sonata, canzona, sinfonia, etc., indifferently to pieces which are identi-cal in form. Nicolas à Kempis, for example, published symphonies for one (!), two, three, four and five instruments (1649), and Tommaso Antonio Vitali a Concerto di Sonate (1701), etc., etc. Certain conventions in performance may also be misleading: for instance, a sonata for violin alone, unless it is specifically stated to be without a bass, is in reality accompanied by a bass stringed instrument as well as a harmonic instrument, keyboard or theorbo which realizes the figured bass: in other words, there are three performers instead of one. A sonate à trois implies four executants, two dessus, a string bass and a harmonic instrument. On the other hand, some trios (cf. Op. 8 by Biagio Marini) require only two instruments, violin and organ, because the organist is responsible for two parts, one for each hand.

Nevertheless there are certain features that are sufficiently general and apparent to enable us to see where we are going.

We must remember, too, that the rapid development in the claboration of instrumental forms that took place during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was largely due to three influences, the advent of vocal monody with its corollary, which we have already noted, the continuo; the birth of opera, and the progress made in the art of instrument-making. In the latter sphere, so rapid was the progress made by Italian artisans, especially in the region of Cremona, that the violin, whose evolution was practically complete, was universally adopted as early as 1600 as a soprano instrument capable

The Month of April. Tapestry from the "Mois Lucas" (after Lucas van Leyden). 1688-1689. Paris, Mobilier National.





Carel von Fabritius: Musician in a landscape. 1620. London, National Gallery.

of competing with the best singers, with the result that in opera, oratorio and cantatas it was entrusted with passages forming the greatest contrast with the vocal parts. It only remained for the next step to be taken, namely a composition for stringed instruments without any vocal support, the *Sonata*.

The earliest sonatas known, in the modern sense of the word, are contained in the first book of Sinfonie e Galliarde by Salomon Rossi Ebreo, violinist in the service of the Dukes of Mantua. Published in 1607, this collection includes sinfonie (I preserve the spelling to avoid confusion with the developed form of the symphony) and one piece expressly called sonata (à 4); but, out of the 27 pieces it contains, 15 present in embryo the principal features of the trio sonata.

For the latter was, in fact, the origin of the whole sonata cycle; the solo violin sonata came later. We may suppose that the pioneers in this new form, however attracted they may have been by the style of the accompanied monody, had not yet shaken off the still recent memory of the old polyphony. Hence the compromise with the trio.

For the sake of clarity—a laudable object in itself—the instrumental production of the pre-classical era is often represented as baying developed in two succes—e tages—that of the suite and (hit)—of the sonata—the suite consisting entirel—of dances, and the

sonata of movements of a more abstract nature, designated only by their tempo—grave, adagio, allegro, etc. In reality it would be truer to say that the two forms co-existed until about 1680, their paths diverging at one moment and meeting again at another until they were fused into one.



Jean Closterman: Portrait of Henry Purcell, London, Nat. Portrait Gallery.

This indeterminate character can best be observed in the works of the most outstanding musician of this primitive period, Biagio Marini, of Brescia, Bet-

ween 1617 and 1655 he published 22 collections intended for voices or instruments. His Opus I, the Affetti musicali (1617), contains a succession of 27 pieces entitled ballet, sinfonia, sonate, canzone, aria, branle, gaillarde, courante "arranged", to quote from the title-page, "so as to be played on violins, cornets or any kind of instrument". (In parenthesis, it is noteworthy that Marini was one of the first, if not the first composer, to number his collections opera prima, opera secunda, etc. The abbreviation op. is not derived from the Latin opus, but from the Italian).

The style of writing in these pieces varies from strict counterpoint to 'vertical' harmony, passing through all the intermediary degrees. As a rule the pieces called *sonate* are more polyphonic, and the *sinfonie* and *balletti* simpler and more harmonic in style; but certain sonatas, especially in the last book, (1655) contain passages harmonized vertically, while there are contrapuntal passages in the *sinfonie* and *balletti*.

Each sonata generally contains three or four sections linked together. The alternation of slow and fast was not to become a regular feature until the end of the century.

Although the form was still indeterminate, there was considerable rhythmic and melodic invention. Biagio Marini's innovations in instrumental technique are also interesting. As early as 1629

he wrote some passages of doublestopping which, although of a simple nature, show that he was interested in technical virtuosity, and in his introduction to the collection he speaks of "...some fanciful sonatas to be played in two and three parts on one violin, and other curious and modern inventions."

Two years earlier there is further evidence of this concern with virtuosity, bordering almost on charlatanism, in the Capriccio Stravagante by Carlo Farina (Dresden 1627), a violinist from Mantua at the Court of Saxony. In this piece for a quartet of strings the first violin indulges in an extravagant display of imitations of various instruments -hurdy-gurdy, military fife and tabor, guitar, etc.-and animal cries-imitations achieved by all sorts of ingenious technical means-double-stopping, tremolos, chords struck with the wood of the bow, etc. Instructions are given as to how, the strings should be attacked to ensure a faithful reproduction of cocks crowing, dogs barking or the frenzied miauling of cats.

At the same time less extravagent forms of virtuosity were beginning to be cultivated in sonatas for solo violin and bass, more rarely in trios, examples of which occur at a fairly early date. The earliest example of this is a sonata by the Milanese composer Giovanni Paolo Cima, hidden away in a voluminous book, dated 1610, of Concerti ecclesiastici, among 52 pieces of sacred vocal music and five other instrumental pieces. It is in the form of a sort of Caprice based on a leading theme which is exchanged between violin and bass and repeated in notes of shorter value clearly intended as a technical display, although on a modest scale.

But progress in this direction was rapid. Already apparent in some other pieces for solo violin in the Affetti musicali, it is still more marked in the works of Ottavio Grandi, Dario Castello and especially Marco Uccellini who was the first to devote an entire book to sonatas for solo violin and bass (1649). In them he exploited the high register of the instrument with a boldness that remained without a parallel for a long time to come, and that seemed to Corelli so excessive that he reacted vigorously.

I do not propose here to embark upon the history of the sonata; by describing its origin and early stages I have merely wished to show that it was not the invention of a single creator, and that its form has never been definitely established once and for all. During the whole century and up till about 1740, almost the only features

Intimate concert. Frontispiece to "Deliciae Musicae", collection of songs published in London for Henry Playford, 1696.

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Arcangelo Corelli: Grave from the second Sonata, op. 5. Amsterdam (circ. 1710).

which remained unchanged were as follows: it consisted of several movements, from three to six, each movement being constructed on one principal theme, generally recurring twice, the second repetition beginning in the dominant and returning again to end in the tonic. The development section was enlivened by virtuoso passages, and the order of the movements was gradually established, alternating between slow and fast, e.g.: Grave-allegro-adagioallegro, or Allegro-grave-allegro-adagioallegro, or some similar arrangement. But that this formal structure was by no means strictly adhered to is shown by the fact that in 1744, for example,

■ Robert Tournières (?): La Barre and his interpreters. Oil painting. London, National Gallery. It is probably Michel de la Barre who is standing in the centre turning the pages of a score bearing the inscription "Trio de M. de la Barre, Sonate en trio pour la flûte traver (sière), Première Sonate". (From the Third book of Trios for violins, flutes and oboes, together with sonatas for transverse flute, by Michel de la Barre, pub. Paris, 1707.)

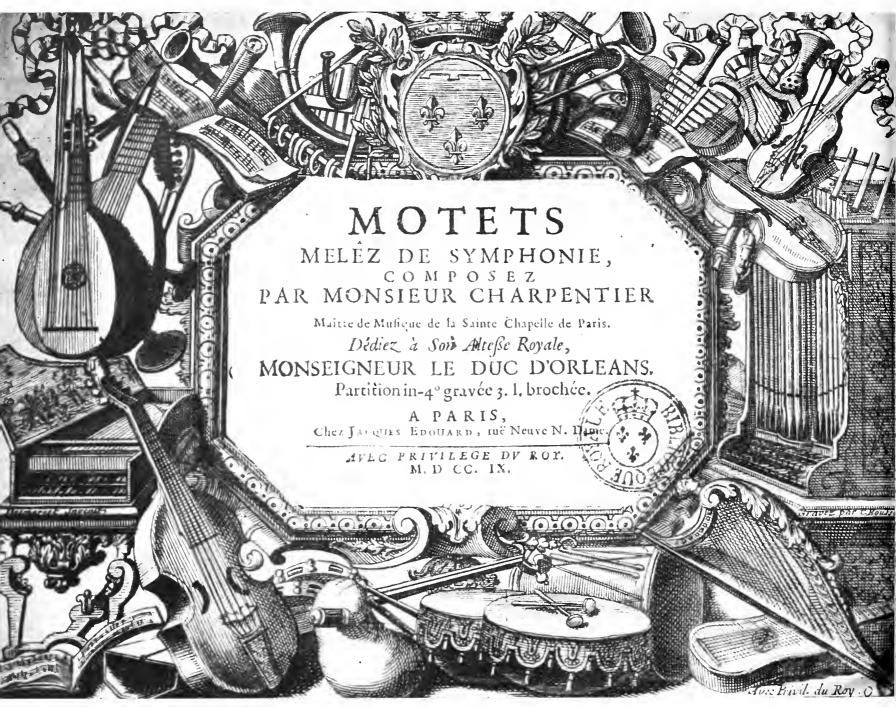
scarcely twelve years before the birth of Mozart, Veracini prefaced a book of sonatas with the following announcement: "Each of these sonatas comprises four or five movements; but this is only to increase the value and substance of this collection..... two or three movements from each sonata, chosen ad libitum, are enough to make up a sonata of correct proportions."

As to the suite, it was originally nothing but a simple juxtaposition of dances written in the same mode or key for the greater convenience of the performer (especially in music for the lute which is a difficult instrument to tune). Sometimes they were grouped according to the type of dance, as was often done in France in the seventeenth century.

In Germany, Schein, Scheidt and their contemporaries between 1610 and 1630, Isaac Posch and Paul Peuerl, arranged their dance-suites, written for small orchestras, in a more regular pattern consisting of from four to five movements, e.g. Paduana (Pavane)—Intrada—Dantz—Gagliarda. The gigue which by the end of the century was

the movement with which all suites had almost invariably to end, here only appears very occasionally and never at the end. In the harpsichord suites of Jacob Froberger (1616-1667) which by the beauty of their ideas are much superior to anything that preceded them, the sarabande is placed at the end. It was only after the death of Froberger, in the posthumous edition of his works (1693), that in order to comply with the fashion of the day, the order of the pieces was inverted so that the gigue became the necessary. and joyful conclusion to the whole work.

In Italy the Suite, foreshadowed in the sixteenth century in the tandem-form of Passamezzo-Saltarello (two dances, the first generally slow and in binary rhythm, the second fast and ternary, and often based on the same theme) followed a pattern so similar to that of the sonata that the two forms were soon almost indistinguishable: certain suites, sometimes called balletti and consisting of a prelude and a few dances which sometimes contained passages in contrapuntal style, did not differ in any



Marc-Antoine Charpentier: "Motets melez de symphonie". Paris, 1709. (Posthumous.) Engraving by Housset, after Desmarest.

essential aspect from what was later to be called the *sonata da camera*.

After about the year 1690 the interpenetration between the sonata, the suite and the balletto was so complete that to avoid the risk of church music, where the sonata was much in favour, being pervaded by dance rhythms of too frivolous a type, a distinction was made on the title-page between 'church' sonatas (da chiesa) and 'chamber', i.e. 'concert' sonatas (da camera); the latter consisted of a prelude followed by from three to six dances—allemande, courante (or sarabande or sicilienne), gigue 'or gavotte and, later on, menuet with variations).

This distinction was often fictitious, so that for example an adagio in a 'church' sonata was often in fact a sarabande, and a so-called finale none

other than a gigue, the only difference being that they were not labelled as such. Conversely, a prelude in a 'chamber' sonata was sometimes no less majestic than a 'church' prelude, while an allemande could display all the polyphonic wealth of a fugal allegro.

#### Corelli

The sonatas of Corelli represent the highest point of perfection in this form. Born in 1653 at Fusignano near Bologna, Arcangelo Corelli played a capital part in the evolution of Italian music. From his teachers, Giovanni Benvenuti and Leonardo Bruguoli, he had acquired all the accomplished technique of the Venetians. His profound musical enl-

ture and the uncompromising purity of his taste made him fully aware of the dangers of virtuosity considered as an end in itself. He established a violin technique based on the imitation of the purest form of singing, a technique so rational and so well organised that it has been the basis of teaching in all schools of violin-playing ever since. Corelli was the founder of the first classical school of violin-playing, and thereby made possible the development of an instrumental art without which none of the great classical forms could ever have come into being. Few works have ever been the subject of such long and deep meditation, as those of Corelli, During a life of normal length (he died in 1713) he published in all only two books of 'Church trios' Op. I and 3 (1681 and 1689), two of 'chamber'

trios Op. 2 and 4 (1685 and 1694), one of sonatas for violin and bass, the famous Op. 5 (1700) which ran into more than 30 editions in the course of the century, and one of concertos, Op. 6 (1714, posthumous). No music for the theatre and no vocal music of any kind.

Corelli's inspiration is of unfailing nobility and purity, while his sober and restrained style of writing combines in an effortless way traditional counterpoint with accompanied melody. The modern major-minor tonality holds undisputed sway in all his music. He was not its "inventor" as has been somewhat too lightly asserted, but he affirmed and established it more decisively than any of his predecessors by the way in which he modulates around an initial tonality.

None of his sonata-movements shows the opposition between two themes which was to be the essence of the classical sonata. One theme predominates in each piece, sometimes so completely as to provide the whole of the material, sometimes engendering, by imitation, accessory themes and sequences. The movements are sometimes enlivened, after the fashion of the divertissements in a fugue, by virtuoso passages of a deliberately sober character, far removed from the acrobatics indulged in by an Uccellini or, again, as found in the works of the old Austro-German school.

Corelli also played an important part in the development of the concerto grosso. Following a course often met with in the history of forms, instrumental music had for some time past been seeking the equivalent of the Venetian custom of writing for two or more choirs. In 1597 Giovanni Gabrieli published several Canzoni for two groups of four instruments (the





Nicolas Chedeville: Les Défis, ou l'Etude Amusante. circ. 1740.

number could be doubled) sometimes playing alternately and sometimes together. Thus the Sonata pian e forte is written for a quartet composed of a cornet and three trombones, and another in which the cornet is replaced by a violin. Adriano Bianchieri in his Fantasia in eco (1596) obtains a similar effect by a simple alternation of forte and piano.

From now on experiments of this kind became more and more numerous, tending towards the creation of works in which the element of contrast was especially prominent: contrast between a fairly large instrumental ensemble and a small group of soloists, a mainly harmonic style predominating on the

François Couperin le Grand, engraving by Flipart, after Bouys.

one hand with counterpoint confined almost exclusively to the *tutti*; or, again between the firm structure of these *tutti* and the almost improvisatory nature of the *soli*.

All these features are to be found round about 1670, especially in the sonatas of Legrenzi, P.A. Ziani, etc., «à fortes parties», for four, five or six instruments which were played in church, some of the desks being reinforced so as not to be drowned by the organ. Giovanni Legrenzi, especially, (1626-1690) played an important part in these experiments with orchestration.

During the period 1670-1680 two works by Alessandro Stradella, although entitled *Sinfonie*, are really, save in name, authentic *concerti grossi*; that is



Portrait of Antonio Vivaldi, engraved by La Cave.

to say works in which a group of soloists (two violins and a bass) called the concertino is opposed, or occasionally joined to the main body of instrumentalists (known as the tutti, or concerto grosso). Thus the hearer's interest is heightened by a dual conflict between the soloists of the concertino on the one hand, and between the concertino and the concerto grosso on the other. This form was for a long time consecrated by the Concerti grossi, op. 6 of Corelli, composed between 1682 and 1713 and published after his death.

They were a source of inspiration to the great composers of the pre-classical era, all of whom made their contribution to this form—Albinoni, Bonporti, Geminiani, Benedetto Marcello, Locatelli, J.S. Bach, Handel, etc.

#### The solo concerto

Two names, however, in this connection, mcrit special attention—those of Torelli and Vivaldi. But these masters are still more famous for their contributions to a form which was soon to supersede the concerto grosso, namely, the solo concerto. They did not invent it entirely. If we look for its basic principle not so much in the arrangement and development of the themes as in the opposition between soloist and orchestra, then it is to opera that we must turn our attention only to discover that it was probably Lully, that great

Antonio Vivaldi: The Seasons, 1725, (Primavera, and the beginning of the corresponding concerts.) master of dramatic music, who was the first to introduce this new form in that episode in his *Ballet des Muses* (1666) to which I have already referred.

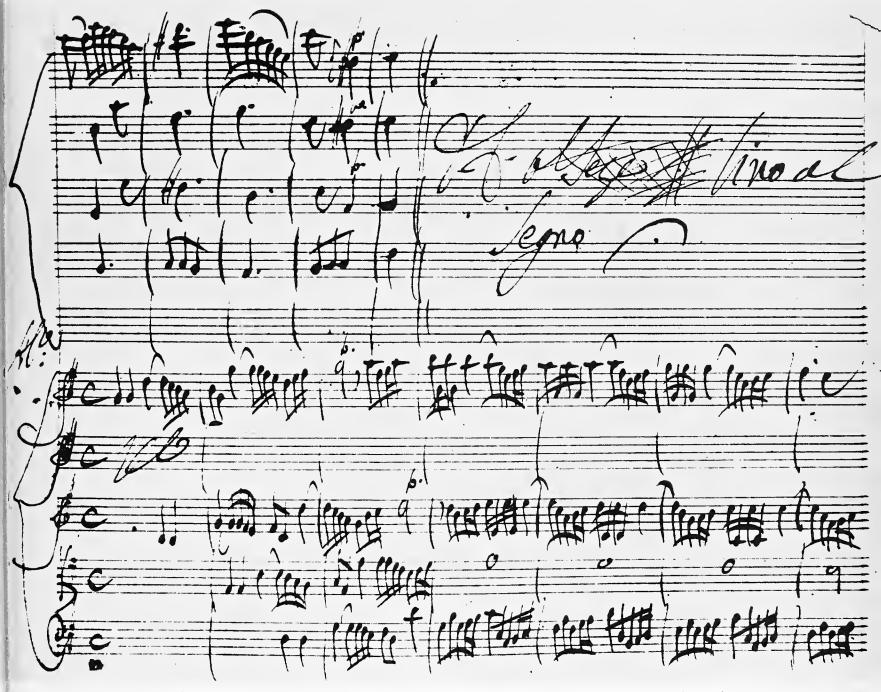
Among those who round about 1700 had systematically attempted to give prominence to the soloist were Torelli, Albinoni, B. Marcello, Jacchini and others. The first to do so would seem to be Guiseppe Torelli (1650-1708). His works written between 1692 and 1698 already show signs of a serious attempt in this direction: in his concerti grossi, for example (Op. 8, 1709 posth.) the solo concerto takes definite shape. The last six are written for a violino che concerta solo, and their ternary form allegro-adagio-allegro has been preserved in the concerto of modern times; it was also retained in the symphony up to the time when a minuet or a scherzo was added.

These concertos have been unjustly neglected, for their musical substance is of fine quality and their structure sound. The virtuoso passages they contain already show considerable boldness. The slow movements are often little more than cadences linking two allegros, but they can also be played independently and will then be found, in spite of their brevity, to possess an uncommon melodic distinction.

Torelli died in 1708. It was about this time that Vivaldi began to write concertos, the first book of which, the *Estro armonico*, Op. 3, did not appear until 1712 although parts of it, at least, had been in circulation for some years.

Born about 1676 Antonio Vivaldi, the "Red Priest", had a varied career although he passed most of his life in the service of the Church. He was for a long time attached to the Conservatory of La Pietà in Venice, one of the four institutions originally intended as hospices for homeless children and generally





Antonio Vivaldi: Concerto in G Major. Autograph MS. (Mauro Foà, III, coll. Turin Library.)

known as Ospedali where the teaching of music was a speciality. Orchestras and choirs famed throughout Europe were formed here, and we have from the pen of the President de Brosses, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the English historian Burney glowing descriptions of the concerts that were given there. Vivaldi at the Pietà taught the violin, conducted the orchestra and composed a great deal of music to meet the heavy demand for it. But he also found time to compose operas which he produced and conducted in Venice and elsewhere, as well as to appear on the platform as a virtuoso and take private pupils outside the Conservatory. Apart from some 40 operas, an imposing quantity of sacred music and about a hundred instrumental compositions, he also wrote some 460 concertos, more than two-

thirds of which are solo concertos, mainly for the violin but also for the violoncello (over 20), flute, oboe, bassoon and mandoline.

Even when hastily put together, which was often the case since he sometimes had to provide a complete programme at very short notice, his works nevertheless show extraordinary power.

The construction of his concertos is as clear as day, the balance between tutti and soloist marvellously maintained and the degree of virtuosity demanded from the soloist unfailingly effective, "rewarding" as the phrase goes in the profession. The orchestra is full of colour, even when reduced to strings only, but Vivaldi knew well enough what effects he could obtain from flutes, oboes and horns. The thematic material is abundant and varied to a degree to which it

would be difficult to find a parallel, while the vivacious rhythms of this music have contributed in no small degree to its success.

But what caused it to become in the space of a few years so popular throughout Europe was its lyrical character, which was then something quite new in instrumental music and directly derived from opera. Under-rated, unjustly it would seem, as a dramatic composer, Vivaldi nevertheless wrote continuously for the theatre from 1713 until his death. It was from the theatre orchestra that he borrowed his orchestral effects, fierce unisons, muted passages, tremolos and accompaniments lightened by the absence of basses; and it was with singers in his mind that he wrote his adagios which are conceived as operatic airs, full of personal expressions of pathos, violence or sweetness that foreshadow the romantic period. If we remember, too, the picturesque descriptive passages in the *Seasons*, it is easy to understand why Vivaldi has been not unjustly considered to be the inventor of the solo concerto.

It was through him, indeed, that J. S. Bach had his first experience of this form, and it was the Vivaldian model that was adopted by Albinoni (in the works of his maturity when he imitated Vivaldi after having served him as a model), Giuseppe Matteo Alberti, Somis, Bonporti, Tartini, Leclair, Telemann and practically all the concerto composers of the period 1719-1760. And we also find his influence in the earliest symphonic forms.

Like the violin, the violoncello began its career in Italy, first as an accompanying, and then from 1680 onwards as a solo instrument as in the Ricercate, Trattenimenti, and Sonatas of Giambattista degli Antoni, G. B. Vitali, Domenico Gabrieli, who all belonged to the Bolognese school, as did also Giuseppe Jacchini, the most celebrated of them all at the beginning of the eighteenth century. After that there were plenty of great 'cellists'; Cervetto and Vandini were acclaimed throughout Europe, while G. B. Bononcini, Caldara and Boccherini were probably their equals, although their fame as composers has eclipsed their reputation as virtuosi.

### Frescobaldi and his origins

As regards keyboard music, the practice of writing in the same style for both organ and harpsichord continued for some time. Nevertheless certain organists of merit deserve mention, following on the Merulos and the Gabrielis, e.g., Banchieri, Diruta, Viadana, the Neapolitans Ascanio Mayone and Gio. Maria Trabaci. But all these are eclipsed by the extraordinarily powerful personality of Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643).

Born at Ferrara, a pupil of Luzzaschi, Frescobaldi wrote madrigals, canzoni and various instrumental pieces which consolidated the development of the sonata for stringed instruments. But it was his keyboard compositions (organ and harpsichord) and his prowess as an executant that made his reputation. No other composer-virtuoso had ever before aroused the enthusiasm of both the connoisseur and the ordinary public; sometimes as many as 30,000 people assembled in St. Peter's in Rome to hear him play.

His conception of virtuosity was something entirely new. He cultivated quite openly a brilliant style in performance: the preface to his *Toccate e partite* of 1614 contains explicit instructions on how to

make the most of a bravura passage in order to impress the public. At the same time he aimed at truthfulness in expression and endeavoured always to play "con affetti cantabili". His creative imagination infused into instrumental forms a passionately poetic or austerely pathetic spirit, and the tempo and atmosphere often change with a suddenness and violence without a parallel except in dramatic music. He is able to subordinate this mobility of mood to the demands of constructional logic. His Capriccio sopra un soggetto (Caprice on a theme) of 1624 implies, by the title alone, the modern principle of monothematic composition in which an idea is first expounded and then developed and presented in its various aspects without relinquishing its characteristic features. In his harmonic experiments, such as those in the Toccata di durezza (durezza here meaning dissonance), Frescobaldi already foreshadows the Chromatic Fantasia of J. S. Bach.

After Frescobaldi, Italian organ music was represented only by second-rate composers a few of whom, among others Domenico Zipoli, kept up the old polyphonic tradition until the beginning of the eighteenth century. But already the harpsichord was beginning to come into its own. B. Pasquini (1637-1719), can also like Frescobaldi, be learned without being pedantic (cf. his Variations on La Follia). At the same time he anticipates the harmonic emancipation, vivacity and technical innovations of Domenico Scarlatti. There is plenty of talent, too, in the sonatas of the Siennese composer Azzolino della Ciaia (1671-1755), and there were doubtless other harpsichord players of merit among the musicians of Tuscany and Umbria.

But it was Naples that was, from now on, to be the centre of a most brilliant school of keyboard composers and performers. The most famous master of his generation, bestriding the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Gaetano Greco (c. 1657-c. 1728), wrote some unpublished pieces in a vein of light fantasy which struck an entirely new note. It is thought (and this would be his highest claim to fame) that he may have taught Dominico Scarlatti, an authentic genius whose supremacy was never called in question even in his lifetime.

### Domenico Scarlatti and the harpsichord

Born in Naples in 1685, the same year as J. S. Bach and Handel, he travelled through Europe before accepting the post of harpsichordist in Madrid to Princess Madelena-Theresa of Portugal, the future Queen of Spain. It was in Madrid that he produced most of his

instrumental compositions, and he died there in 1757. At the beginning of his career he wrote operas and sacred music to which some attention is now being paid, after being monopolized until now by his 555 Sonatas. Apart from about ten pieces for violin and bass and about the same number which may have been written for the pianoforte (at the end of his life there were three specimens of this new instrument in the various residences of his Queen) his entire instrumental output was intended for the harpsichord.

With few exceptions, these sonatas (which in the first printed edition were entitled Essercizi, in the sense of Studies) are simple in structure, consisting of one movement with two symmetrical repeats, like the dances in the preclassical Suite. But within this very condensed, and to all appearances, stereotyped form, Scarlatti has poured out treasures of invention. The technique of the instrument is exploited with a degree of virtuosity which even the modern executant sometimes has difficulty in attaining; the thematic development, in spite of the rigid and narrow framework, proceeds on original lines. The harmony is so advanced that some transcribers have even felt bound to soften it! And all these resources only serve as a vehicle for musical ideas whose spontaneous expression has all the freedom of improvisation, joyful as often as not, but sometimes malicious or sarcastic. The mood is on occasions one of pervasive melancholy: Scarlatti usually escapes from it with an unexpected volte-face as if, like Mozart, he thought it indecent to allow the hearer a glimpse of his secret

Outside Italy instrumental music in Europe between 1600 and 1750 underwent important changes and developed in many different ways. In England keyboard music no longer flourished as it had in the days of the Elizabethan virginalists; as regards organ music, the voluntaries (fantasias in many different styles originally contrapuntal but later influenced by the sonata, operatic airs etc.) provided Benjamin Rogers, John Blow, Purcell with material for some interesting works. But it was the repertory of the string ensemble that was to be enriched more than any other. The trio Sonatas of Purcell (1638) are among the most accomplished of those modelled on Corelli, but it was above all in the "fancies" and "concerts" for stringed instruments (viols and violins) that the British excelled. The contrapuntal "fancies" of the sixteenth century were succeeded by a freer form somewhere between the canzona on the one hand and the dance-suite on the other. William Byrd, John Coperario, Alfonso

Opposite: Claude Lefèvre: Portrait of ► Charles Couperin. Versailles Museum.



Ferrabosco, Orlando Gibbons, William Lawes, John Jenkins are among the most successful composers of this genre. Here, again, Purcell produced some masterpieces, equalled only by Matthew Locke (c. 1630-1677) whose counterpoint in his Consorts for three and four viols sounds strangely modern.

# The harpsichord in France: the Couperins

In the seventeenth century France could boast of a school of organ composers one of the founders of which, Jean Titelouze (1563-1633) was born twenty years before Frescobaldi with whom he can be compared in many respects, notably for his subtle harmonic sense. In his Magnificat, and in his Hymnes de l'Eglise pour toucher sur l'orgue (1623) he makes use of dissonance just as-to quote his own words-"a painter employs shading in his pictures so as to throw into greater relief the brightness and light of day". This bold and lucid approach, which can also be seen in the formal structure of his works, invests them with a striking grandeur.

Perhaps the relative obscurity which surrounds this very remarkable composer, performer and teacher is due to the fact that throughout his career he lived at Rouen-which did not, however, prevent the Chapters of the principal churches in Paris (including Notre Dame in 1610) from inviting him to test and inaugurate their new organs. After him there was talent in plenty. I will confine myself to mentioning Jacques Champion de Chambonnières (1602-1672), (better known as a harpsichordist), Henri Dumont, Guillaume Nivers, François Roberday, Nicolas Antoine Le Bègue, Jacques Boyvin (also an organist at Rouen), Gilles Jullien of Chartres, Nicolas de Grigny (1671-1703) of Rheims (author of an organ-hook which was copied by Bach when a young man), Pierre du Mage, Louis Marchand, Jean-François Dandrieu, Louis-Claude Daquin and Claude Balbastre. One of the features common to them all was their skill in "registering", i.e. combining the different timbres available on the organ. The two last mentioned, however, belong to the middle of the eighteenth century which, as regards French organ music, was a period of decadence and of a style that was agreeable and polite, sometimes called "galant" and sometimes "rocaitle" or "rococo"-all of which terms only serve to show the incompatibility of such a style with an instrument dedicated, for many years yet to come, to sacred art.

The French clavecinists in the early seventeenth century owed less to the

organ than to the lute. They appear to have made a point of reproducing, without any technical necessity, the various artifices which lute players had to employ: syncopation, notes not heard but understood, creating gaps in the polyphony which the hearer's imagination had to supply, and chord notes played as arpeggios instead of simultaneously. This gave rise to an art which was systematized as well as subtle, of which traces still remain in the works of Jacques Champion de Chambonnières, the first of the great French clavecinists, who had many disciples. His best pupil was Louis Couperin (1629-1661), whose output, though slender, was of the highest quality; most of his works can be played either on the organ or the harpsichord. They contain beauties which, though more austere, are in no way inferior to those displayed in the works of François Couperin, Louis' nephew. Between these two members of a dynasty of musicians which lasted until 1860 (the date of the death of Céleste, great-grand-daughter of Louis) came several excellent clavecinists worthy of mention. I will name only two -d'Anglebert and Gaspard Le Roux (harpsichord players would do well to get to know them better) without of course pretending to compare them in any way with François Couperin "Le Grand", the most eminent French musician of his century after Rameau whom, however, he surpasses as a composer for the harpsichord.

Born in 1668, appointed at the age of 17 to the organ of Saint-Gervais, teacher of the harpsichord to the young princes, raised to the nobility by Louis XIV for whose intention he composed his Concerts Royaux, he died in 1733, leaving masses, motets, the Leçons de Tenèbres (recently revealed in gramophone recordings), secular songs, pieces for organ, Trio Sonatas and "concerts" for stringed instruments in which he proposed to reconcile French and Italian tastes (he had been the first to compose and cause to be performed in Paris, in 1692, under an Italian pseudonym, a sonata in imitation of Corelli which was published 34 years later in his *Nations* collection); and finally, his pieces for the harpsichord (about 230, in four books published from 1716 to 1730) which were completed by a treatise on interpretation, L'Art de toucher le clavecin (1716) written in a vein at once malicious and naive and with the most exact science. In these pieces, grouped by "orders" consisting of from 4 to 24 pieces in the same key, the writing for the instrument shows great refinement as well as qualities of imagination and feeling which in our day Debussy took as a model. Impressionist before the term was invented, Couperin can indeed portray with prodigious exactitude emotions, psychological portraits and landscapes; but he is equally

successful in purely descriptive scenes or caricatures like the Fastes de la grande Ménestrandise (in which he makes fun of the corporation of strolling players who had asserted their superiority over the organists) which have the same cruel acuity of vision as a series of etchings by Callot.

Compared to Couperin, Dandrieu, Balbastre, Daquin and Dagincour are lacking in character, although they wrote some pages, more especially Dagincour, of real distinction.

In the first pieces published by Rameau in 1706—before the First Book of Couperin—the style is modelled on the Italian violin sonata, incisive and firm and, at the same time, marked by that rhythmic piquancy characteristic of all his works. Later he acquired greater suppleness and harmonic refinement, but his music rarely evokes an atmosphere of intimate charm and quiet meditation, or an image whose outlines are delicately blurred. Where he excels is in character dances which he often includes in his ballet music. But his Pièces de clavecin en concert, written in 1741, played an important part in the revolution that was then taking place, as a result of which the violin was being superseded in sonatas by the harpsichord (a question to which I shall return later

# Late development of the violin in France : Leclair

The violin, except in the hands of the strolling players, had, as we have seen, for a long time encountered stubborn opposition on the part of French music lovers. The situation changed suddenly towards the end of the seventeenth century for reasons the chief of which seems to have been the rise to fame of Corelli.

This master had acquired in Roman society an exceptional situation due to his genius and culture, and also to a conjunction of circumstances which had led to a lowering of the barriers which separated professional musicians from polite society. He was received in the most exclusive circles, and distinguished foreigners considered it an honour to be introduced to him with the result that his name began to be celebrated outside ltaly, often before his music had been heard.

In Paris the curiosity of avant-garde circles was aroused, and no sooner had the trios of Corelli reached the country than they became all the rage on account of the novelty of their style. They gave rise to a controversy, less well known, but no less ardent than that which was aroused by the 'Bouffons' half a century later. It was then that Couperin, in view



Domenico Scarlatti: Credo. Autograph MS. Paris, Conservatoire Library.

of the success of his pseudo-Italian sonata, had to acknowledge his authorship. The next step was the publication in 1695, but this time openly, of the French sonatas of Sébastien de Brossard, Elisabeth Jacquet de Laguerre and Jean-Féry Rebel.

These works, although striving to imitate their Trans-Alpine models, are yet very French in character, especially in their melodic design, in their harmonies inherited from Lully, and in their evident preference for descriptive or evocative effects copied from the clavecinists. Full maturity was reached in the person of Jean-Marie Leclair, universally acknowledged to be the founder of the French violin school.<sup>30</sup>

Born at Lyons in 1697, he had for a long time hesitated between the career

of violinist-composer and that of dancer and ballet-master. A definite decision was not taken until some years after 1723, the year in which his first book of sonatas was published—a work so new and rich in ideas, so brilliantly and logically written for the violin, and so balanced in form as to create an impression of true classicism. Right up to his tragic death—he was stabled one night in October 1764 by an unknown assassin-Leclair had never ceased composing, and his melodic, rhythmic and harmonic invention (his harmony is almost as rich as Rameau's) had never failed him. He left 49 sonatas for violin and bass, 29 trios, 12 sonatas for two violins without bass (unequalled for more than a century for their liveness and verve), 12 concertos, and an opera, Scylla et Glaucus, of which the symphonic parts and the choruses might well have been from Rameau's pen.

During Leclair's lifetime, some violinists in his circle (but much less famous) had ventured on an innovation which had a very favourable effect on the instrumental balance in sonata playing. The sudden popularity of the violin sonata had encouraged amateurs, and especially society ladies, to learn to accompany on the harpsichord, and so prevalent had this practice become that Couperin, in his Art de toucher le clavecin, put in a modest plea in favour of the harpsichord as a solo instrument, and against its being used to accompany sonata.<sup>31</sup>

The mark of supreme skill was clearly to entrust the harpsichord, in sonatas, with a role which would no longer be merely that of a simple subordinate.

This idea occurred to Mondonville (1711-1772), a violonist virtuoso and composer of talent who published in 1734 or 1735 his Pièces de clavecin en sonate avec accompagnement de violon. As the title indicates, the situation was here reversed. It is the harpsichord that takes the leading part, and in several movements the violin can be omitted while the harpsichord part is sufficiently substantial for it to be played alone. A feature of these sonatas, which differentiates them from the Six Sonatas for Harpsichord and Violin of J. S. Bach (c. 1720) is that the style of writing is much more closely adapted to suit the nature of each instrument. Except in some of the slow movements, Bach employed a three-part counterpoint of which the two upper parts (violin and right hand of the harpsichordist) were almost always interchangeable. But in the Mondonville sonatas the figuration is varied for each instrument, the harpsichord's being the most important part.

This was the procedure followed by Guillemain, Rameau (in his Pièces de clavecin en concert), J. C. Bach, Schobert, Edelmann, and Mozart at the beginning of his career. Eventually the moral support provided by the violin accompaniment was found to be superflous, and it was then that the sonata for keyboard alone began to come into its own; up till then there had only been some isolated and archaic specimens (e.g., Gregorio Strozzi, Kuhnau), for the sonatas of Scarlatti were an isolated phenomenon having no connection with this evolution. 32

# Instrumental music in the Netherlands and Germany

In the Germanic countries the output of keyboard music between 1580-1750 was very large and bore the imprint of strongly marked national characteristics. Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612), who had studied with the Gabrielis in Venice, brought back with him from there the secret of Italian melody and charm which did not conflict with his own Germanic qualities of ponderation and gravity. He wrote vocal music, both sacred and profane, but he was above all an organist, and his ricercari, toecatas and adaptations of church chorals and songs are most interesting.

Another still more striking personality is that of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinek (1562-1621) who, it seems, never left his native city of Amsterdam. However, like J. S. Bach, he took a great interest in what went on outside his own country and had certainly read eagerly the works

of the Venetian, French and English composers.

In addition to Sweelinck, the Netherlandish school could boast of several organists of renown including the celebrated English composer and virtuoso Peter Philips who lived at Antwerp or Brussels from 1590, at the latest, until his death which occurred between 1633 and 1640.

Among the German virtuosi who helped to propagate throughout the country the style of Frescobaldi the most interesting was Froberger, already mentioned in connection with the structure of his suites for harpsichord. He travelled widely, and had lived in Vienna, Paris and Rome before embarking in London on a quite unforeseen, though short-lived career: having been twice robbed on the journey to England, he was glad to accept the post of organblower at Westminster Abbey. He ended his days at Montbéliard, at the house of his admirer the Countess Sybil of Wurtemberg. He wrote a great deal, but exclusively for the harpsichord and organ, although in those days, as has already been pointed out, such specialization was most unusual. His music shows remarkable powers of invention, originality and boldness, especially in his big organ toccatas, while the harpsichord suites are distinguished by their liveliness, transparent style of writing, wit and sensibility.

Froberger counted among his very distinguished pupils the Swede, Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707) who settled at Lübeck in 1668 and carried on with renewed vigour the movement inaugurated by his predecessor Franz Tunder, another of Frescobaldi's pupils. The quality of his works and his fame as an executant induced the young J. S. Bach in 1709 to make the journey, on foot, from Arnstadt to Lübeck to hear him play; incidentally, he stayed in Lübeck so long that on his return he ran into serious difficulties.

A near contemporary of Buxtehude was Johann Pachelbel of Nüremberg (1653-1706), a pupil of Johann Caspar Kerl who had perhaps studied with Frescobaldi, and certainly with Carissimi. Pachelbel's works include suites for two violins, Partitas (in the sense of Variations: later the term came to be applied to dance-suites) for organ, 94 fugues on the Magnificat, choralpreludes and variations, the finest of which had been inspired by cruel bereavements-hence their gravity and occasional poignant sadness. After this the German school became so abundant that it would be impossible to give even a summary account of it: J. S. Bach may be said to represent all that it stood for. As regards the harpsichord, the situation was equally favourable. To the names already cited must be added that of Johann Jacob Kuhnau (1660-1722), Bach's predecessor at the Thomasschule at Leipzig. He was the first to adapt to the harpsichord the church sonata, hitherto confined to stringed instruments; but he is best known as the composer of descriptive *Bible Stories*.

In the sphere of violin music, the Austro-Germans, though less backward than the French, did not begin to write any music of interest until the second half of the seventeenth century. But their progress was rapid and took an original turn. They were the first to cultivate systematically the polyphonic resources of the violin. Their doublestopping technique soon surpassed the boldest of the Italian experiments in this direction. They applied themselves to writing in a fugal style, seemingly in imitation of the organ, or to cultivating a deliberately humorous or picturesque descriptive approach. To obtain certain chords more easily, they used to heighten or lower by a tone or a semi-tone (sometimes even a third) one or more of the strings of the violin. The story is told of Nicolaus Strungk playing to Corelli on a violin 'untuned' in this way, whereupon the Master, in his amazement exclaimed (punning on his own name): "They call me Archangel; they might just as well call you Arch-Devil!" Heinrich von Biber (1644-1704) went further than anyone in this direction, but used these means only as a vehicle for his inspiration. A Passacaglia from his pen for violin alone, composed about 1675, anticipates, and to a large extent explains, the gigantic Chaconne of J.S. Bach.

It should be added that the lute survived in Germany long after it had been abandoned in other European countries. The Suites by the Silesian composer Esaias Reusner (1636-1679), and especially the sonatas of Sylvius-Leopold Weiss (1684-1790), are among the finest masterpieces in the whole repertory of the instrument.

In the Iberian Peninsular the organ was represented by composers who without being as brilliant or as famous as Cabezon, deserve to be better known: for example, the Portuguese Manuel Rodriguez Coelho (1583-?), the Spaniards Aguilera de Heredia and, above all, Juan José Cabanilles (1644-1712) who has been called "the Spanish Frescobaldi"; he left several hundred works which by their variety of form and spontaneity of inspiration do indeed put one in mind of the great Roman organist.

As regards the harpsichord, the one great master was Fr. Antonio Soler (1729-1783) who in many ways resembles Scarlatti, but preserves an unmistakeable individuality.<sup>33</sup>

# From Bach to Mozart



#### Bach and Handel

On the threshold of the period during which the classical style was about to take definite shape, we must pause now to consider a body of works which owing to their universality cannot be fitted into any chronological scheme; for in terms of time they represent so complete a fusion of old and new styles that they anticipate the future as much as they summarize the past, while from the point of view of geographical distribution they synthesize, without thereby effacing their distinctive features, the three most vigorous schools of music in Europe at that time, the Italian, the French and the German, of which the latter had just achieved its emancipation. Needless to say, the reference is to the works of Johann Sebastian Bach, a personage equal at least in stature to Josquin des Prez, Lasso and Monteverdi, but who impresses us even more because Bach, who is nearer to our time, expresses himself in a language and in forms that are still current, and to which our sensibility is directly attuned.

He was born on March 21, 1685, at Eisenach, in Thuringia, his father being a violinist who himself represented the

■ Johann-Sebastian Bach: Opening of the Cantata Du Friedefürst, Herr Jesu Christ. Autograph MS. Paris, Conservatoire Libr. sixth generation of a dynasty of organists, municipal musicians and cantors (musical directors in the Protestant church). Orphaned at the age of ten, he was brought up by his elder brother. At 15 he sang soprano in the choir of the



Above, J.J. Ihle: portrait of J.S. Bach at the age of 35. Eisenach, Bach Museum. Below: J. S. Bach: Klavier-Übung, Part 3. Leipzig, 1739. Paris, Bibl. Nat.

school at Lünebourg, and it was there that he was able to study the organ with Georg Boehm, a highly cultured man who began to initiate him into the French style. The young Bach had other opportunities of getting to know French music at the Court chapel at Celle where Lully's influence was paramount, but where they also played a lot of Italian music. In 1703 he was engaged as violinist in the orchestra of Prince Johann-Ernst of Saxe-Weimar, a post which he exchanged the same year for that of organist at Arnstadt. In 1707 he accepted a similar situation at Mulhouse in Thuringia. The following year he returned to the Court of Weimar as organist and Court musician, and in 1714 was appointed solo violinist (Concertmeister). Three years later the Kapellmeister died and Bach expected to be appointed in his place; but his application was refused. He then gave expression to his resentment at being treated in this way in such violent terms that the Prince sent him to prison for a month before accepting his resignation. Bach then entered the service of Prince Leopold of Anhalt, at Cöthen, where he remained from 1717 to 1723 as director of music at the Court, with no very specific duties, so that he was free to travel a little, give concerts, do some organ-testing and above all compose as he pleased, having little or no obligations. At the head of an orchestra which was

Dritter Theil

Clavier Doung

be stehend

in

Verschied enen Vorspielen

iber die

Catechismus-und and ere Gesænge,

vor die Orgel:

Denen Liebhabern, und besonders denen Kennern

von dergleichen Arbeit, zur Gemuths Ergezung

versträget von

Schann Sebastian Bach,

Kanigl Pohlnischen, und Charfurst, Sæchs

Host Compositeur, Capellmeister, und

Directore Chori Kustei in Leipzig.

In Verlegung deschuthoris.

small (15 musicians) but select, he had in this way at his disposal a perfect laboratory which enabled him to carry out experiments in orchestration which resulted, in 1721, in the Brandenburg Concertos, the sonatas and partitas for violin alone, the violin concertos and the sonatas for harpsichord and violin obbligato.

In 1722 the post of Cantor at St. Thomas in Leipzig falling vacant on the death of Kuhnau, Bach applied for the post, and was accepted. Taking up his duties in the spring of 1723, he remained there to the end of his life. In 1749, when in already failing health, his condition became worse, and a last-minute operation failed to save his tired-out eyesight. He was quite blind when he succumbed to an attack of apoplexy on July 28, 1750.

His life had been a full one, but externally uneventful. His family responsibilities were heavy. Married for the first time at the age of 22 to his cousin Maria-Barbara Bach, he had the misfortune to lose her in 1720. Of the seven children of this marriage, three died in infancy, and it was no doubt on account of the four who survived—among whom were Carl Philip Emanuel and Wilhelm Friedmann—that he married again the following year, to the singer Anna-Magdalena Wülcken by whom he had thirteen more children, six of whom survived, including Johann Christian. How he discharged his duties as a teacher not all of which were purely musical (the Cantor of St. Thomas was responsible for the discipline and general education of his unruly little choristers) while coping at the same time with heavy and sometimes ridiculous administrative tasks, travelling (though more and more rarely towards the end of his career) and maintaining an intense activity as a composer, I cannot attempt to relate here, as this information will be found in numerous books, notably those by Spitta (basic), Pirro, Schweitzer, Dufourcq, etc...

As to his works, I shall not attempt to do more than outline their essential characteristics. They cover an immense field, excluding music for the theatre, consisting mainly of instrumental music, on the one hand, and sacred vocal music on the other, with in addition 23 secular cantatas (of secondary importance compared to the church cantatas), motets, oratorios, the *B minor Mass* and the *Passions*.

Of the instrumental music, most of the organ works—preludes, fugues, toccatas, choral-preludes—continue on a larger scale the traditions of Sweelinck, Boehm, Pachelbel, Kuhnau and Buxtehude. The concertos (for organ, one or more harpsichords, one or more violins) are of Italian inspiration. Bach studied Corelli, Albinoni and especially Vivaldi, some ten of whose concertos he transcribed. It was from Vivaldi, too, that

he borrowed the tripartite scheme allegro-adagio-allegro and the internal structure of the different movements, and from Vivaldi that he learned the secret of spacious melodies with ornamentation derived from bel canto, together with a freer and more expressive style of bowing than that favoured by the German masters with whom, however, he shows his affinities in the polyphonic style of his sonatas for violin alone. The dances in the Partitas for violon alone are nearly all based on French models, as are those that make up the suites for harpsichord. The French overture, à la Lully, serves as a prelude to the four orchestral suites as well as to a certain number of other instrumental works. Bach assimilated all these forms and left his mark upon them.

But in his entire output his church music occupies a preponderant place, and in this we must include almost everything he wrote for the organ.

The chorals, numbering nearly 400, form the nucleus of his religious vocal music. They are animated by a spirit of profound piety which, allied to a technical mastery without a parallel, gives to these short pieces, treated in the simplest manner, a universal appeal. Through the choral Bach becomes accessible to the mass of believers, and it was in this form that he chose to express the reactions of the crowd in the St. John and St. Matthew Passions (1723 and 1729 respectively).

These Passions, which were intended to supplement the services in Holy Week, are conceived in the form of an oratorio for solo, chorus, organ and orchestra. They are highly elaborate compositions in which, however, the intention is clearly to remain on a plane of simplicity which will be intelligible to all the faithful.

The B minor Mass, assembled for the Elector of Saxony (the Court at Dresden was still Catholic) is conceived in a different vein. It would seem that Bach in composing it felt less hampered by the conventions of the church service, and free to exploit to the full all the resources of his technique—hence the complexity and difficulty in performance of his masterpiece, one of the most sublime in the whole repertory of sacred music.

The five a cappella Motets, which are so difficult and so grandiose that it may be wondered whether they were really sung without any instrumental support, are no less remarkable for their expressive power and for the demands they make upon the virtuosity of the performers

In the 200 Cantatas which have survived out of Bach's enormous output (in Leipzig alone, where one was sung every Sunday, he had composed five complete annual cycles) his whole artistic evolution since the period 1707-1710 can be retraced. The pliability of this form enabled him to use or dispense with

recitative to employ a large or small orchestra and chorus as occasion demanded, to accompany his soloists with an instrumental *obbligato*, and to write either harmonically or contrapuntally as he pleased, thus creating a world of music which, as has been said, seems to contain in embryo the whole future of the art.

Nevertheless, and it cannot be repeated too often, Bach did not consider himself as an innovator. In the eyes of his contemporaries, the Cantor of Leipzig was a reactionary. He owed more, in fact, to the old polyphonists whose technique he had brought to the highest pitch of perfection, than to the advocates of the 'new style'. One has only to consider how he endowed the fugue with a new and prodigious vitality and greatly enlarged its scope, and how, too, he transformed the figured choral where, instead of the old note-for-note harmonization, all the parts are treated contrapuntally, except the one that contains the theme of the choral which is used as a cantus fermus. Even when he adopts the new style of accompanied melody, he rarely dispenses with accessory contrapuntal imitations which, however, are no less melodious than the principal voice.

His modernism consists in obtaining from reputedly scholastic methods results of an astonishing richness and vitality and in raising to the highest artistic level works of a didactic nature. This is what he did in the Musical Offering and Art of the Fugue and in a less transcendent fashion, but in a way that was more likely to have fruitful results because intended for a much wider public, in the Well-Tempered Clavier. These 48 preludes and fugues, composed in 1722 and 1744, were the first complete demonstration of the practical value of equal temperament.

Few people in his own day realized the value of Bach's contribution to music. He had, in relatively restricted circles, a high reputation as a virtuoso. His worth as a composer was known to some of his colleagues, to a handful of pupils and, later in his career, to King Frederick II who received him handsomely at Potsdam in 1747, three years before his death. After that he was shrouded in almost complete obscurity. The few works published in his lifetime, of which not many copies were printed, were forgotten, and his manuscripts dispersed. Hardly any of his works were known to Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, and their admiration at the time was shared by very few. Some of those, however, who had been directly or indirectly his disciples, were trying, unobtrusively, to keep his name alive. Forkel wrote his first biography in 1802; Zelter, a pupil of Kirnberger, who was himself a pupil

J. A. Aved: Portrait of Jean-Philippe ► Rameau. Oil painting. Dijon Museum.





T. Hudson: Portrait of G.F. Handel. 1749. Hamburg Museum.

of Bach, studied his works and revealed them to Mendelssohn; and it was Mendelssohn who suddenly, after a masterly performance of the Passion according to St. Matthew which he conducted in Berlin in 1829, started the movement which led to the foundation in 1850 of the Bach Society, the main object of which was to undertake the publication of his entire works. Everybody knows the success of this enterprise and the devotion with which this genius, who for a century was under-estimated or neglected, is now surrounded—a devotion which is sometimes carried to excess, by amposers whose aesthetic is trametrically opposed to Bach's pretend to be following in his footsteps.

However great he may seem to us, there is another master, Handel, his

exact contemporary, who is considered by many to be his equal, although the differences which separate them-their characters, careers and fields of activity —make a comparison between them more difficult and unprofitable than one between musicians whose temperaments and activities are more alike. This pro-Handelian tendency, though not yet very widespread, is gaining ground. It may be that Handel has to pay the penalty for a posthumous fame which came to him sooner than it did to Bach. Far from having been lorgotten after his death he became, as we shall see, the national musician in his adopted country, England, and so he did not provide the

Title-page of Handel's opera: Alexander, London, 1726. nineteenth century with the thrill of rediscovering him; but factors such as these play a not unimportant part in the mechanism of fame.

I shall not attempt to do more than mention a few dates in his life, which was too eyentful to be summarized here; but I would remind the reader that Romain Rolland's life of Handel, probably his best work, has all the fascination of the finest novel of adventure.

Georg Friedrich Handel was born at Halle, in Saxony, on February 23rd, 1685, twenty-six days before the birth of J. S. Bach. He was four years old when his musical gifts first became apparent; at the age of ten he was already composing and played the organ and the harpsichord extremely well; but his family would have wished him to devote himself to classical studies and then the law. His career as a professional musician actually began in 1703 in Hamburg, where he played in the theatre orchestra as harpsichordist and occupied a desk among the second violins. While there, he composed three German operas and, in five or six years, enough works of all kinds, according to his biographer Mainwaring, to fill two trunks.

While travelling in Italy in 1707 he became acquainted with Loti, the two Scarlattis and Corelli. He also wrote some successful Italian operas. In 1710 the Elector of Hanover offered him a post at his Court. The same year he paid a short visit to London. He went again in 1712 and settled there against the wishes of his patron, who became King of England in 1714. Handel obtained a pardon, but from that moment he led a complicated life, marked by incessant struggles and overwork, except for a short period of relative tranquillity in the service of the Duke of Chandos.

He embarked on operatic enterprises in which he acted as administrator and





Claude Gillot: Guitar Serenade. Wash drawing. Early 18th cent. Paris, Louvre.

impresario, and provided most of the repertoire, while defending himself against rival companies who treated him no better than he treated them. He was ruined several times, and reduced to bankruptcy. In 1736 a stroke brought on partial paralysis and mental disturbances which, however, he was able to overcome, thanks to a cure at Aix-la-Chapelle and an exceptionally robust constitution. He went back to work as vigorously as before, but overtaxed his strength. His eyesight gave out, and in 1753 he became completely blind, but continued to conduct his works and play the organ until eight days before his death (April 14, 1759).

He became a naturalized Englishman in 1726. In a country where there had been no great musicians since Purcell,

he had some outstanding successes. Messiah (1742) had been a triumph. After 1745 he had broken down the last vestiges of hostility. The latest oratorios: Judas Maccabaeus, Joshua, Alexander Balus, Solomon, Susanna, Jephthah, etc., had been received with growing enthusiasm. They suited so perfectly the taste of the country that, after Handel's death, it became customary to perform these works on a more and more grandiose scale. Handel had almost always been satisfied with a small orchestra and chorus (in 1759, the year of his death, 33 players in all, excluding the organ). In 1784 Messiah was given in West-minster Abbey with 274 singers and 250 instrumentalists. In 1791 more than 1000 executants took part; in 1854 more than 1600, and in 1859 4000.

This inflation, which is also applied to certain works of J. S. Bach, generally to their detriment, is not so damaging to Handel whose style is less refined. Not that he was less well equipped; his technique was all that could be desired; but he wrote as one who had had experience of the theatre and had a very clear idea of the demands that could be made on his executants so as to be sure of his effects; he also knew precisely the degree of polyphonic complexity beyond which the audience could no longer follow, His output was enormous: 41 operas, 13 pasticcios (operas written in collaboration), 10 secular chorals, 21 oratorios, 2 Passions, 250 other vocal works,

Pages 118-119, Watteau: Les Charmes de ▶ la vie. Oil. London, Wallace Collection.





both sacred and secular, 52 concertos, a dozen other orchestral works, nearly 150 chamber music pieces, excluding works that have not been catalogued. Naturally he wrote quickly. But this is not an explanation of his style, which Romain Rolland supplies in his analysis

# In France: from Lully to Rameau

In France it was different. The Lully tradition was still very much alive, although the French in the eighteenth of Lully. Colasse, Gervais, Bertin, Desmarets, Teobaldo, Gatti and J.-B. Stuck, known as 'Baptistin', all produced operas such as one might have expected from technically competent epigones. Marin Marais is far superior to them in dramatic power, and it is not surprising





G.P. Telemann: "Gulliver's Travels", "Der getrue Musik-Meister", Hamburg, 1728: In contrast to Lilliput's Chaconne, written in short values, Telemann composed Brobdingnac's Gigue in long values which were no longer in use.

of the cantatas of Buxtehude: "Writing for a concert audience and not for a religious service, he had to be sure that his music would be accessible to all. He kept his music free from the dense and abundant polyphony at which, however, he excelled. He wanted it to be clear and strong, broadly designed and even descriptive. He deliberately sacrificed profusion to a more ascetic concentration; what he lost in abundance he gained in intensity. It was, in the highest degree, like the art of Handel, music for a whole nation..." All this tallies with the comparison made, in fine, between Handel and the old classical orators, he heing obliged, like them, "to speak from the platform to huge mixed audiences to whom he had to make himself immediately intelligible". Romain Rolland concludes: "In his ability to speak directly to the people, as in many other aspects of his genius, Handel carried on the sturdy tradition of Cavalli and Gluck. But he surpasses them. Only Beethoven has followed in his footsteps.'

In his operas and oratorios Handel introduced many innovations. Not only did he strengthen the chorus and amplify the symphonic episodes in his operas, he also created those great scenes all in one piece in which the airs and ariosi, linked by a recitative sec or accompanied, are integrated in the action instead of interrupting it. He nevertheless remained faithful to a large extent, as was the fa him throughout Europe, to the pattern and spirit of Italian opera.

century were scarcely aware of it. Rameau's contemporaries saw between him and his illustrious predecessor a gulf which the passage of time has bridged, leaving us far more conscious of what they had in common than of differences between them.

Between Lully and Rameau there was no lack of talent. I have already drawn attention to the *Médée* of M.-A. Char-



G. P. Telemann. Engraving (anonymous)

pentier (1693) which has been described "as the most learned and elaborate of all the works printed" since the death

that this incomparable virtuoso on the viols should have been a masterly orchestrator, as can be seen in the celebrated 'tempest' scene in *Alcyone* (1706).

The outstanding names during this interregnum are those of Campra, Destouches and Mouret—the latter especially in connection with the history of opéra-comique to which we shall be coming later. Campra (1660-1744), whose church music includes some motets marked by profound religious feeling, also wrote gay and attractive music for the theatre. He had great facility in inventing rhythms and new orchestral colour. As regards his melody, he excelled in French airs, but his Piedmontese origin had endowed him with the gift of parodying most successfully the Italian airs which it was the fashion to introduce into opera-ballet. He owes his fame, not so much to his big lyric tragedies, which sound rather hollow, as to things like l'Europe Galante, Carnaval de Venise and Fêtes Vénitiennes which are masterpieces of a genre in which his best pupil, Destouches, was to distinguish himself.

André-Cardinal Destouches (1672-1749) had begun as an amateur writing successful popular songs before he took lessons from Campra; almost immediately afterwards he obtained with his first opera *Issé* (1697) such a success that he decided to take up a musical career. His masterpiece the ballet *Eléments*, with its instinctive rather than sophisticated harmonies, which are no less

interesting than his declamation and orchestration, is a perfect example of Regency taste. It reflects a tendency, common at the time in all the arts, and due to the evolution of manners and ideas, towards a style that was less solemn than that of the Grand Siècle. Side by side with the Lully-ist type of rather ponderous lyric tragedy a new form that was steadily gaining in popularity was the opera-ballet, in which the dramatic element, together with its principal adjunct the recitative, tended to be eliminated in favour of divertissements, sung and danced, and divided into acts, or entrées sufficiently disconnected for it to be possible to change their order, or to leave one out altogether or even interpolate it in another work, not necessarily by the same author.

Mythological or legendary subjects were neglected in favour of exoticism, 'Turkish' fantasies or Carnival scenes which opened the door to more modern ideas and encouraged a comic vein which, as the success of the 'Bouffons' was soon to confirm, was clearly what the public wanted.

There was still, however, room for the grandiose. On February 28, 1732, Montéclair's Jephté made a deep impression by its dramatic intensity, the convincing accent of its declamation and its powerfully constructed choruses. An anonymous writer in the Mercure (May, 1761) declared that it was this lyric tragedy that had made Rameau decide to compose for the theatre. "The noble and distinguished character of this work had impressed him... From that moment he became convinced that our dramatic music could acquire fresh strength and attain new heights of beauty. He decided to compose such music; he dared to be a creator." 'Dared' would seem to be correct: in a letter dated May, 1744, Rameau stated textually: "I have been interested in the theatre since the age of 12; I only began to write operas when I was 50 and even then I did not think I should be able to; I ventured, I was lucky, I continued.'

He had, it is true, a long career behind him when he made his debut in the theatre. Born at Dijon in 1683 (two years before Bach) he had been an organist, had composed some sacred music and some secular cantatas, gained a certain reputation with several books of harpsichord pieces prefaced by notices in which he laid down authoritative rules for fingering and ornamentation, and composed a few little airs for the "Théâtre de la Foire". He had above all made a name for himself with his Traité de l'harmonie réduite à ses principes naturels (1722) and

J. G. Walther: Musikalisches Lexicon. Leipzig, 1732. Frontispiece showing performance of a cantata in a south German church. Behind the organist, the 'conductor' holds a roll of music in each hand.



the numerous theoretical writings in which he completed or corrected the Treatise, or refuted the objections of his adversaries. These works are of considerable importance; at a time when a harmonic conception of music was replacing the old polyphonic system Rameau established harmony on the basis on which it had been practised and taught almost as long as the tonal system has been accepted as a dogma. His premises, however, are not as rigid and pedantic as his adversaries have tried to make out. He opens up new perspectives, but does not impose them; above all, he is far from believing that the science of composition has any value in itself if inspiration be lacking. This is the thought underlying his melancholy confession to Chabanon towards the end of his career: "Every day my taste improves, but I have no longer any inspiration ('génie')".

Coming to the theatre at the age of 50 with a theory and technique so firmly established, he wished to convince himself of their validity: "If I was attracted (to the theatre) by the pleasure it gave me, as an Artist, to realize there a great many pictures which I had imagined in my mind... it gave me still greater pleasure as a Philosopher to see the working of all those phenomena which were no longer strange to me, and to conjure up an infinity of effects with whose cause I had made myself familiar." (Démonstration du Principe de l'Harmonie, 1750.)

I shall not attempt a catalogue of his operatic works, of which the most outstanding are Hippolyte et Aricie (the earliest in date, 1733), Les Indes Galantes, Castor et Pollux and Platée; but they amount in all to some 25 scores—lyric tragedies and comedies, pastorals on classical subjects, opera-ballets, ballet and comedy-ballet acts—more than 80 acts in all.

As regards the economy of means, structure and, up to a point, atmosphere of these works, Rameau continues in the tradition of Lully—whom the staunchest supporters of Lully accuse him of betraying. It is true that far from imitating him slavishly he introduces, when he thinks fit, innovations whose boldness might well seem sacriligious to dyed-inthe-wool traditionalists. If his operas have not, perhaps, the same continuity and élan as those of his great predecessor, this is due in part to the weakness of the libretti on which he was content to work: but they are certainly much richer in content thanks to the eloquence of the orchestral writing which was something entirely new. The fact that he was the first to introduce the clarinet into his orchestration (Zoroastre, 1749) and that he used the horns and all the virtuoso resources of the strings-double-stops, pizzicati, etc.—with a feeling for colour that is altogether 'modern' is by no

means all. He gave the fusion of orchestra, song and dance, the eloquence of a veritable dramatic symphony.

It was on this powerful organism so rich in potentialities that he relied for confirmation of his discoveries with regard to the expressive powers of harmony: "It is certain that harmony can arouse in us emotions corresponding to the chords used to that effect. Some chords are sad, others languorous, tender, agreeable or surprising." He defines and classifies them in great detail. He stresses the capital importance of dissonances, as well as the dangers that can arise from their abuse. Mozart, in a well known letter to his father, à propos Il Seraglio, shows the same concern, and speaks of the need to avoid exaggeration and bad taste, even when dramatic tension is at its height.

Rameau continued to compose until his death in 1764. It was his fate to be alternately acclaimed and abused; at first set up in opposition to Lully, and later enrolled—much against his will—in one or other of the camps which divided the defenders and opponents of French music.

#### Franco-Italian rivalry

I have already alluded to the old Franco-Italian dispute which had agitated Parisian musical circles when Cavalli came to the capital in 1660-1662 and flared up again much more violently at the end of the century when Corelli's fame had led to the triumph of the violin sonata and an entirely new instrumental style. A war of broad-sheets broke out then, and in 1702 an Italophil as naive as he was enthusiastic, the Abbé Raguenet, brought things to a head by publishing a brochure entitled: Parallèle des Italiens et des Français en ce qui regarde la musique et les opéras in which he extolled in exaggerated terms the merits of Italian music. He got his reply in 1704 or 1705 in the form of a factum of 700 pages entitled Comparaison de la musique italienne et de la musique française in which Lecerf de la Viéville de Frencuse drew a picture, with more emotion than logic, of Italian music which he described as artificial and extravagant, resembling "a good-natured but well made-up coquette ... perpetually skittish, and always trying to be conspicuous without reason.'

The controversy, which went on for several years, did not, however, prevent the success of the pro-Italians in the matter of instrumental music.

We have just seen how the arrival of Ramean had begun to disturb the calm which the French lyric theatre was still enjoying. The Guerre des Bouffons, unleashed by the production at the

Opéra on August 1st 1752 of Pergolesi's La Serva Padrona, put an end to this relative calm. Already in January of this year the Baron Grimm, a German who had recently arrived from Ratisbon and posed as an arbiter of French taste, had launched an offensive against French opera on the occasion of a revival of the Omphale of Destouches. It was useless to seek "either technical proficiency, richness or harmony", the singing parts being, as always in France, "shamefully profancd".

Only one French composer escaped the massacre—Rameau, "author of Platée, a sublime work": 'sublime' was the last adjective to apply to what Rameau called a 'comedy-ballet', and which is almost an operetta. But it was necessary to take the credit of having spared at least one Frenchman the better to assassinate the others.

The campaign continued with renewed vigour after the production of La Serva Padrona which, curiously enough, had been given in Paris in 1746 without causing the slightest disturbance; this time, Pergolese's intermezzo was praised to the skies with the result that Signor Bambini's little troupe remained at the Opéra until March 47, 4754, playing

Opéra until March 17, 1754, playing twice or three times a week a repertory consisting of thirteen intermezzi.

Why was so much importance attached to this little work, charming, but featherweight? It was because, by virtue of its very lightness, vivacity and conciseness, and choice of subject and characters taken from everyday life and not, for once, from the world of heroes and Gods, it conformed to the ideal of the Encyclopaedists by being natural. Consequently the said Encyclopaedists, who up till now had supported Rameau because, in comparison with Lully, he represented progress and 'modernism', now turned away from him or even attacked him. Early in January 1753 a furious exchange of pamphlets in verse and prose, in Court style and in the language of the gutter, began between the pro-Italian faction, grouped mainly round the Queen, and the supporters of French music on the King's side. The 'Queen's party' included Grimm, Diderot, d'Holbach and J. J. Rousseau; on the King's side were Fréron, d'Alembert, Cazotte, P. de Morand, the Abbé Laugier, the Abbé Pallegrin, Caux de Capcval and some lesser gentry, all of them disguised by pseudonyms which deceived nobody. The pamphlet war continued with ever-increasing intensity because everything now was a pretext for throwing oil on the fire. In this same month of January, 1753, a 'heroic pastoral' by Mondonville, Titon et L'Aurore, extolled in exaggerated terms by the 'King's Party', failed precisely on that account, a victim of this excess of zeal.

Between the two camps there was an enormous expenditure of talent, bad



G. B. Panini: The Concert; Performance of La Contesa dei Numi by Leonardo da Vinci, given in Rome on Nov. 27, 1729 in the Polignac palace. Paris, Louvre. On the stage an orchestra and chorus whose composition is similar to that of the classical orchestra.

faith and illogical reasoning. The dispute was based on false premises from the beginning: a comparison was made between two categories of fundamentally different art-forms, French 'Grand Opera' and Italian opéra-bouffe; it would have been more sensible to compare either the lyric tragedies of Lully and Rameau with the opera seria of Vinci and Scarlatti, or else the French 'Théâtre de la Foire' with Italian opéra-bouffe,

There is a curious account of this crisis in the little Afmanach Les Spectacles de Paris for 1756. The writer Abbé de la Porte? pays tribute to the "ravishing beauties" of La Serva Padrona which, according to him, was very well received without arousing any strong feelings. Then he shows how, suddenly, a mediocre work, Le Joueur by Orlandini, provoked extravagant enthusiasm, "A few foreigners, of no value in their own

countries, who had come to seek their fortune in ours, took advantage of the disturbance: they played the part of those obliging individuals who, when there is a fire, hurry towards it empty-handed but do not leave it until their pockets are filled. And so they were seen rushing into the fight, stirring up passions and adding to the tunult so as to do all in their power to bring down further ridicule."



These last lines were aimed, no doubt, at Grimm, and still more at J. J. Rousseau whose Lettre sur la musique francaise (November 1753) is the most violent diatribe ever pronounced against French opera, its aesthetic basis, its repertory and its interpreters. Whereas three years earlier its author divided the honours equally between French and Italian opera, this time the condemnation was complete and unqualified and showed in every line (and 92 pages). How, for example, could it be believed that the Opéra orchestra was "scarcely fit to play in an open-air café" in view of the fact that in 1753 the 16 violins included l'Abbé le Fils, d'Auvergne, Exaudet, Tarade, etc., while the flautist was Blavet, the best in Europe, and more than half the players belonged to the celebrated ensemble of the Concerts Spirituels! Rousseau's conclusion speaks for itself: "I think I have made it clear that there is neither rhythm nor melody in French music because the language is incapable of it; that French singing is nothing but a continual barking, intolerable to the ear; that its harmonies are crude, without expression, serving as 'padding', as in a student's exercise; that French airs are not airs at all; nor is French recitative anything like real recitative. From which I conclude that the French have no music and are incapable of having any, or that if ever they should have any, so much the worse for them."

These exaggerations probably accounted for the public' loss of interest in the Bouffons, who left the capital of their own free will in March 1754, their period of popularity and success having come to an end. But they left behind them a gap that was difficult to fill. Neither La Serva Padrona nor The Music Master were revolutionary works, but they provided an opportunity for certain tendencies that had been in the air for some time past to take shape and assert themselves, namely a desire for verisimilitude and what the Encyclopaedists called 'naturalness', and a reaction against the 'marvellous' and all the mythological stock-in-trade which Saint-Evremond in the previous century had already denounced and which Benedetto Marcello had just ridiculed so ferociously in his Teatro alla moda (1720). In the last analysis Rousseau had unwittingly collaborated with the Bouffons to destroy opera seria, both Italian and French, after John Gay in London had dealt it a formidable blow with his Beggars' Opera (1728). This ran for 63 consecutive nights in Lincoln's Inn Fields and was a merciless parody of Italian 'Grand Opera' in the familiar form of the 'Ballad-Opera' based on English, Scot-

Accademia. Note unusual ensemble of violins unaccompanied by bass or clavier. tish and Irish popular songs and wellknown airs from operas by Purcell, Handel and other masters, the whole put together by John Pepusch, a learned composer who took great pains to conceal his learning. The success of the Beggars' Opera had contributed in no small degree to Handel's first failure.

#### The reform of the opera: Gluck and Piccinni

Traditional opera had not, however, been abandoned altogether, but modified in accordance with the principles of reform, credit for which has been attributed entirely to Gluck, although in point of fact they had been envisaged and partially put into practice long before his time. Thus both Baldassare Galuppi (1706-1785) and Nicola Jomelli (1714-1774) had sought a livelier and more natural style of declamation, a more flexible orchestra and a less oppressive atmosphere. Similar efforts had been made by the Germans Johann Adolf Hasse (1699-1783), Carl Heinrich Graun (1704-1759) and Telemann (1681-1767). All of them, more or less consciously, were putting into practice ideas that had been many times expressed by Metastasio, a librettist and theorist who had had an enormous influence on two or three generations of composers. Because he was trying to modernize opera without breaking away entirely from the Italian tradition, he was thought to be merely an adversary of Gluck's reforms. In fact he had actually laid down a certain number of desiderata which were similar to those advocated by several French aestheticians—the Abbé du Bos, Fr. André, Abbé Batteux —and anticipated those put forward by Count Algarotti in his Saggio sopra l'Opera in Musica (Essay on opera) in 1755; he can therefore be said to have prepared the way for Gluck.

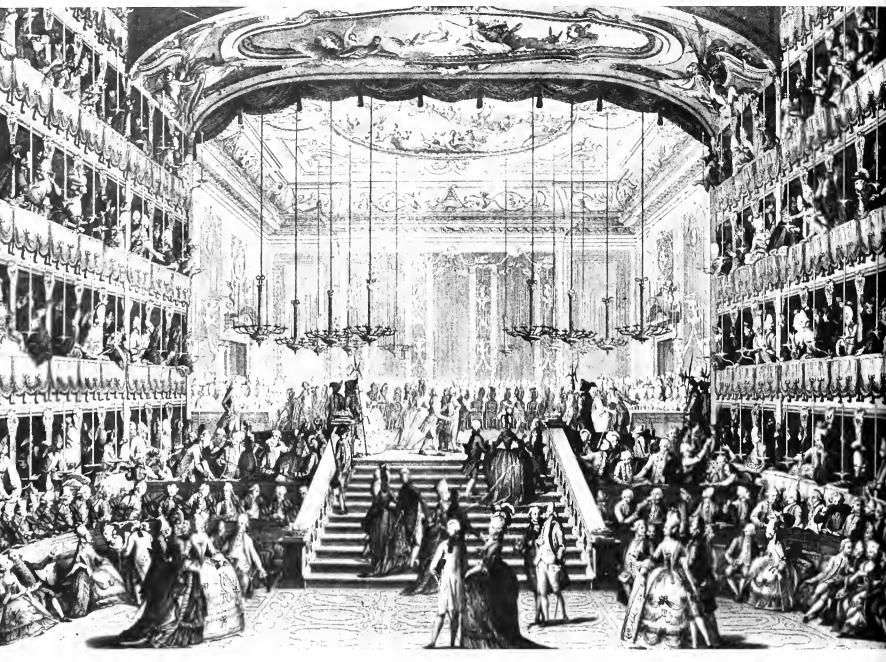
It fell to Gluck to put all these principles into practice which he did with enough éclat and publicity to cause his predecessors to be forgotten. Born at Erasbach in Franconia on July 2, 1714, Christoph Willibald Gluck, after studying in his youth with P. Czernohorski in Prague and Sammartini in Milan, made his début in opera in 1741 with Artaserse which was so successful that he was able to produce in Italy between 1742 and 1745 eight more operas mostly on libretti by Metastasio. In the course of a very active career he went from Italy to London, then to Hamburg, Leipzig, Dresden, Vienna, Copenhagen, Prague, Naples, etc. To describe these journeys in detail would be out of place here. We will mention only the fact that after hearing some Handel

oratorios in England and possiblythough this is doubtful-some operas by Rameau in Paris, he felt a desire to escape from the routine of Italian opera. Nevertheless he continued until 1760 to work on libretti by Metastasio, only deserting him for a series of lyric comedies on French texts by Favart, Anseaume, Sedaine, etc., intended as divertissements for the royal residences at Schoenbrunn, Vienna and elsewhere (L'Isle de Merlin, La Fausse esclave, Cythère assiégée, L'Arbre enchanté, L'Ivrogne corrigé, etc., etc.).

In the meantime his style grew more

mature and tended to become more 'natural' insofar as this was possible in view of his old-fashioned libretti and the habits of the public and of his interpreters. The decisive moment came in 1762 when he had the good fortune to meet, in the person of Ranieri Calzabigi, a librettist whose ideas about the theatre coincided exactly with his own. In his preface to Alceste (1767) he stated expressly that "the celebrated author (Calzabigi) having conceived a new form of lyric drama had substituted for flowery descriptions, useless comparisons, and cold and sententious moralizations, strong passions, interesting situations and the 'language of the heart'." Later on the two men quarrelled, as Calzabigi claimed the credit for all Gluck's innovations. What is certain is that with his libretto for Orfeo ed Euridice he gave Gluck the opportunity of writing an opera after his own heart and scoring a success which, once the initial surprise had subsided, continued to grow until it brought him European fame-although this did not prevent the composer from returning three times to Metastasio for libretti, or from mounting in Vienna in 1764 the best of his French opéra-comiques, La Rencontre imprévue. Yet he still continued to work with Calzabigi, producing Alceste in 1767 and Paride ed Elena in 1770, these two works being accompanied by dedicatory epistles which are in the nature of formal manifestos.

In the one which preceded Alceste Gluck clearly defined the essential features of the innovations he had introduced into the lyric theatre: "It has been my intention to reduce music to her proper function which is to assist poetry in the expression of the feelings and situations contained in the poem without holding up the action or lowering the dramatic temperature by useless or superfluous ornamentation; I think music should be to poetry as bright colours and the skilful handling of light and shade are to a well designed drawing... The Overture, too, in my opinion should suggest to the spectators the general character of the drama, and indicate, so to speak, the plot... I have also done my best to attain beauty through simplicity, and I have avoided



Gala performance at the San Benedetto Theatre in Venice, Jan. 22, 1782, in honour of the Grand Duke and Duchess of Russia. (The arrangement of the orchestra on both sides of the stage was unusual.)

making a display of difficulties to the detriment of clarity."

Tired of life in Vienna where his genius was universally recognized and where little scope remained for his ambitions. Gluck undertook the conquest of Paris. Protected by Marie-Antoinette, his crstwhile pupil, who had danced the minuet at Schoenbrunn in his Parnasso confuso, he was able to arrange for a performance at the Opéra in April 1774 of his Iphigénie en Aulide with a libretto in French by the magistrate du Boullet. "I was quite carried away by it", the young Dauphine, who three weeks later was going to be Queen of France, wrote to her sister Christine, "Nobody talks of anything else; you can't imagine what excitement there has been over this event; it is unbelievable; people take sides and attack one another as if it were some question of religion ... "The French version of Orphec, given in August the

same year, triumphed everywhere; two vears later Alceste, after a hesitant start, met with success, but the opposition, which had been keeping quiet in the face of all these triumplis, became active after the première of Armide (1777) and forced the Gluckists to fight on two fronts. They had in fact to do battle both with the traditionalists who pretended to be affronted because Gluck had made use of a libretto by Quinault already set to music by Lully, and with the Italianate faction who were indignant, according to an anonymous pamphleteer, "at the sight of a German causing a total revolution in France,'

Before even Armide had been performed the pro-Italian party, proliting by Gluck's absence, had summoned to Paris a master of the Neapolitan school, Piccinni [1728-1800].

This excellent pupil of Leo and Durante had already written a lot, In 1760

his opéra-bouffe La Cecchina nubile had been enthusiastically received in Rome. He wrote with exceptional facility: out of the 300 operas with which he is credited by Burney, 136 have survived. and some of them are not without merit. But he was ill equipped for polemics, and still less for intrigue. The Paris Opéra, however, thought it would be amusing to commission from him a Roland on a libretto by Quinault on which Gluck, too, was working. Gluck was furious and destroyed what he had written of this Roland, and another war broke out, similar to that which had been unleashed by the Boullons, and marked by the same confusion and the same mixture of good and bad faith, intelligence and pedantry.

Piccinni's Roland was given with success in January 1778, whereupon the Opéra commissioned him to write an Aphigénie en Tauride and promised to mount it before Gluck's on the same subject which he was to bring back from Vienna. But Gluck, who was of a more combative disposition, saw to it that his opera was given first; the result was an instant and overwhelming success almost without a precedent in the history of the theatre. This triumph, however, dating from the very first performance on May 19, 1779, was offset by the no less immediate failure of his first French opera, Echo de Narcisse given on September 24 of the same year. After this Gluck went back to Vienna where he remained until his death, on November 15, 1787.

His role in the history of opera had been one of capital importance. Even his detractors admit it: only a personality of exceptional stature could have aroused a hatred as deep as that nourished by Debussy towards the Chevalier Gluckalthough Debussy failed to see that this detestable enemy and, according to him, absolute antithesis of the French tradition had, in fact, in more than one respect continued and completed the work of emancipation begun by Rameau. Both were determined to escape from Italian conventionalism and create a genuine music drama. Gluck had employed to this end means less refined than Rameau's, and committed faults which the author of Dardanus would never have tolerated. He often compromised with his own principles by allowing, for example, an aria da capo to hold up the action, or transferring from one work to another not only dances, but whole airs, and sometimes even scenes, which could not be equally 'true' in two different contexts. But to pretend that he was a mediocre musician would be palpably absurd: had he written nothing but the flute solo 'Ombres heureuses' in Orphée, this alone would have stamped him as a composer of genius. And now that the excitement caused by his big masterpieces, Orphée, Armide and the two Iphigenias at the time of their creation has subsided, and we are no longer moved by their dramatic tension

take advantage of the situation because no time was lost in finding a new rival for him in the person of Salieri, a pupil of Gluck and a musician of secondary importance but not devoid of talent. In his *Tarare* (1787), written in collaboration with Beaumarchais, he went much



Giuseppe Zocchi: Concert. Note the two horns which were very rarely employed in chamber music. Wash drawing. Florence, Uffizi.

so much as by the purity of their line, it is perhaps the purely musical quality of certain passages, their plastic beauty, the transparency (rather than brilliance) of the orchestration which enable us to understand why Gluck was so much admired by Wagner and Berlioz.

The disappearance of so formidable a rival left the field clear for Piccinni, at least for a time; but he was unable to further than his master in the direction of the modern lyric drama, doing away with the da capo air, making the recitative more 'natural' and even foreshadowing the twentieth century Sprechgesang by distinguishing between 'sung' passages and others where he thought declamation would be more appropriate, marking the latter in the score 'parlë'.

Another Italian about this time also set out to conquer Paris-Sacchini, a fellow-student of Piccinni at Naples and, like him, a pupil of Durante, as well as being Piccinni's ally against the Gluckists until such time as he was persuaded to turn against him. His career was a brief one, and marked by ill luck. After three or four years of demi-successes and failures, his masterpiece Oedipe à Colonne met with only a very lukewarm reception at first at the Court of Versailles on January 4, 1786, and the unfortunate composer died of sorrow and disappointment on October 8 the same year. Four months later Oedipe triumphed at the Opéra, and after 600 performances turned out to the most often performed piece in the old repertory.

Regular title-page of the publisher Giovanni Chiari, Florence, end of the 18th century. The open-air orchestra has all the features of the pre-classical orchestra, with the accompanist at the harpsichord and the bass strings near him; but the number of violins and violas and the presence of horns make it not unlike the orchestra of Joseph Haydn's first symphonies.



Finally, Paisiello's Le Roi Théodore à Venise (1787) brilliantly completed the Italian contribution. The inspiration is colourful, the orchestra enlivened by a skilful use of woods-winds, while the vocal ensembles are unusually rich.

In the meantime Piccinni had given

'eminently French'—"not so much", it has been remarked, "with the intention of honouring the music of our country as of attributing to it a very humble merit": this was the opéra-comique.

Its best known definition: "a piece in which the sung and the spoken word

to playing comedies mixed with a few airs, sometimes original, but more often borrowed from the popular repertory, such as the very simple songs known as 'vaudevilles', or again, parodies of the most celebrated opera airs. (N.B. 'Parody' in those days did not necessarily mean caricature, but merely the adaptation of new words to an air composed on another text.)

The entertainments given in the theatres at the Fairs of St. Germain and St. Laurent were very similar to those that could be seen at the *Théâtre Italien*: they were usually comedies with songs interspersed (comédies à couplets), slightly coarser perhaps, and often of a topical nature, rather like our modern 'Reviews'.

When in 1697 the Italians were expelled, the Théâtre de la Foire could claim to be their successors. Paying as they did to the Académie Royale de Musique a substantial levy, they were entitled to expect to be allowed to live without too much interference from outside. However, they soon found themselves involved not only with the Opéra, but with the Comédie Française as well, the latter going so far as to forbid them to perform "any comedy, colloquy or dialogue". This gave rise to a long series of skirmishes in which the fairground actors made fun of every decree forbidding them to do this or that, and thus won the support of those who laughed at their shows. Did the Opéra forbid their characters to sing? Then a board would be lowered from the flies bearing the words of the forbidden song; the orchestra would play it, accomplices would hum it in the theatre, and the audience would finally join in.

From 1714 onwards the St. Germain 'Théâtre de la Foire' took the name of Opéra-Comique, and the repertory began to show marked sings of improvement. Writers of talent supplied it with librettos, among them Le Sage, Fuzelier,



Above: H. Robert: Chamber music concert. Pen drawing over crayon sketch. Besançon Museum. Below: C. Huet: Orchestra of Monkeys. Paris, Museum of Decorative Arts.

on the French operatic stage a *Didon* which remained in the repertory until 1826, with 250 performances. He, too, had had several failures and financial set-backs.

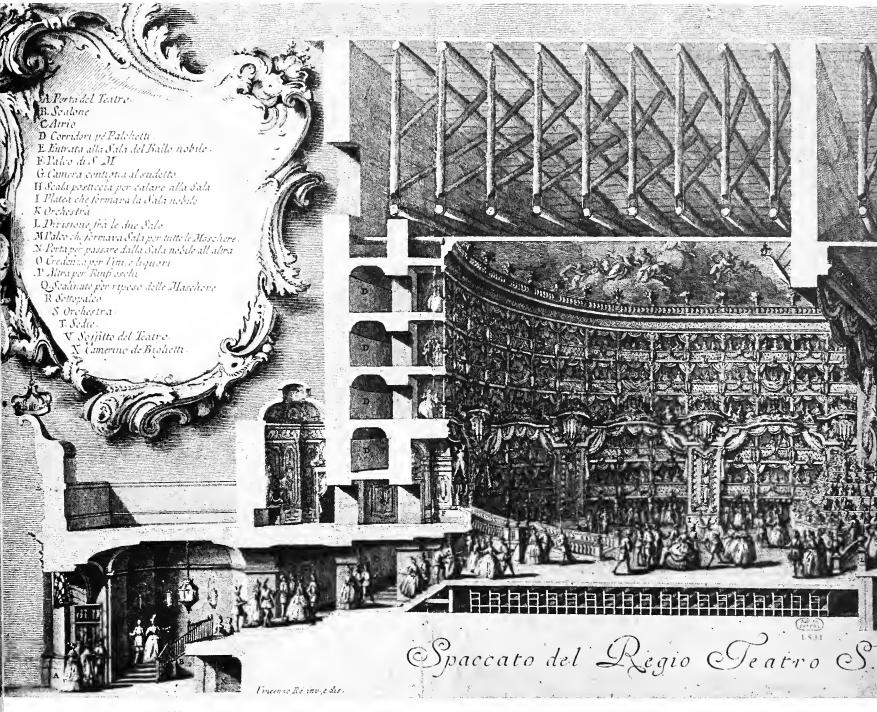
### A typically French form : the opéra-comique

While opera was thus extending its empire and, thanks to noisy controversies, had begun to assume almost as much importance on the social as on the artistic plane, a new *genre* was coming into being that had been described as

both have a place" is only valid for the nineteenth century. Originally, and for a long time, it was the gaiety of the plot and the music that determined the definition; the mixture of the sung and the spoken word is much less important because it is the result, not of any aesthetic principle. but of material considerations.

In Lully's life-time the charter of the 'Royal Academy of Music' carried all sorts of clauses forbidding other theatres to put on anything that resembled an opera; it was forbidden to perform "any musical work that was sung throughout", and also (in 1673) to employ more than two voices and six violins. Consequently the Italians who were installed at the Palais Royal confined themselves





Vincenzo Re: View and cross section of the San Carlo Opera House in Naples.

Piron, Panard. As regards the music, although audiences were still satisfied as a rule with vaudevilles or 'parodies' interspersed here and there between the spoken scenes, the librettists often had the benefit of the much more active collaboration of specialized composers such as Jean-Claude Gilliers. Many of the plays performed at the 'Théâtre de la Foire' had original music in the form of airs or couplets modelled on the vaudevilles; with divertissements which might include solos, vocal ensembles, or a final chorus. It was here that Rameau made his début as a composer for the theatre in 1723 with L'Endriague, a burlesque fairy-play by Piron; but the music has not survived.

Nevertheless, it was at the resuscitated Théâtre Italien that the new form of opera was to reach its full development.

In 1716 the Regent brought back to Paris an Italian troupe which at first was warmly received but after a year fell somewhat into disfavour with the public who were perhaps tired of only half understanding the works which were played in a foreign language. The Italians then had the idea of acquiring the exclusive services of a French composer, Jean-Joseph Mouret, who was then conducting at the Opéra. They could not have made a better choice. Mouret was an excellent craftsman, with plenty of invention of a light and cheerful nature and well versed in the art of writing for both vocal and instrumental ensembles. In his capacity of musical superintendent to the Duchess of Maine he had played a leading part in the

festivities at Sceaux (the 'Grandes Nuits de Sceaux'), and in 1714 had written for this occasion Les Amours de Ragonde, a musical comedy in three acts with airs, ensembles, choruses, dances full of irresistible high spirits. It already contained in essence what a little later opera buffa was to introduce into France and which was to create such a sensation.

Mouret's collaboration with the Théâtre Italien began in 1718 with Le Naufrage au port à l'Anglais, and this was so successful that the company was able to settle permanently in Paris. This was the first of 150 divertissements which the "musicien des grâces", as he was called, wrote for the Italians until 1737, when they parted from him.

Up to the middle of the century the repertory of both the Théâtres de la



Viola d'amore by Caspar Stadler Trabant, Munich, 1714. Viola d'amore by Maussiel, Munich, 1714. Counter-tenor flute and Hamburg zither. Nuremberg, German Mus.

Foire' and of the Italians was enriched by comedies with music (comédies en musique) of many different types, often with music supplied by excellent composers such as Dornel, 'the Abbé' (whose real name was Philippe-Pierre Saint Sevin), M<sup>11e</sup> de La Guerre, Corrette; and we have seen how Rameau himself had written music for these theatres. Favart, who is best known as a librettist and director of the Opéra-Comique, was also a composer, showing a marked preference for vaudevilles which he still defended in his Procès des Ariettes et des Vaudevilles (Foire St. Laurent, 1760) at a time when the 'comédie à ariettes' had already won the day. (By one of those illogicalities often found in the musical vocabulary, the diminutive ariette was applied to an original air, as opposed to a vandeville; in point of fact the ariette

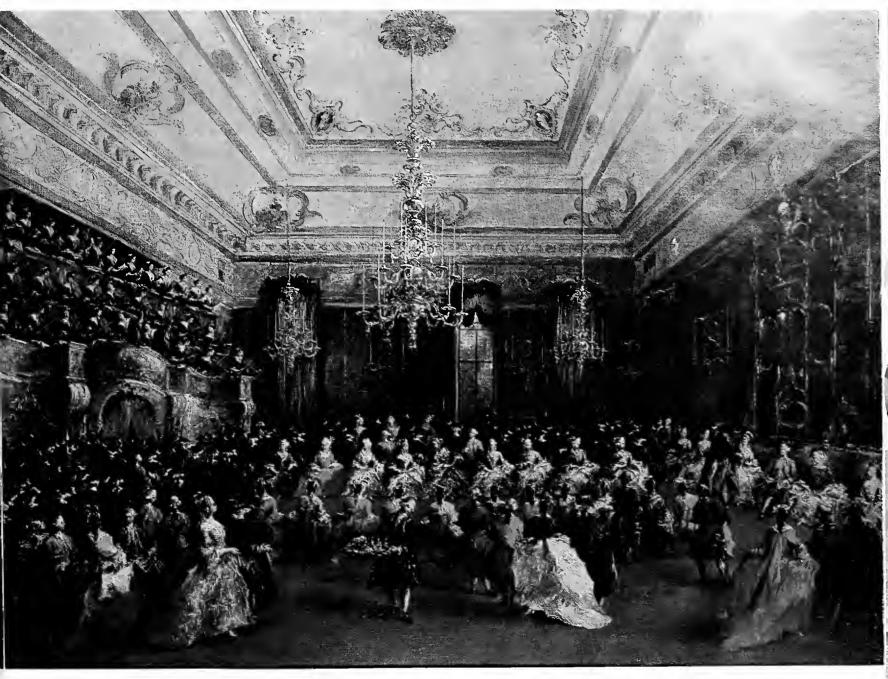
was constructed on the model of the airs in opéra-bouffe which themselves followed the same pattern as the airs in Italian Grand Opera).

The first comédie à ariettes whose style was definitely derived from the intermezzi, Le Rossignol by L'Attaignant, was performed at the Théâtre de la Foire on September 15, 1752, six weeks after the première at the Opéra of La Serva Padrona. On October 18 Rousseau's Le Devin du village was given at Fontaineblean. We know that it was composed before the Bouffons had given their first season in Paris, but Rousseau had seen that kind of thing before in Venice, and the connection is clear. Its success exceeded all expectations. The warmth with which it was received, Rousseau's reputation and the combative attitude he was to assume in the Querelle des Bouffons have lent a somewhat exaggerated importance to a trifle which was far from equalling its models. Lacking their vivacity and technical virtuosity, it relied chiefly on its fresh and ingenuous melodies to make its effect; moreover, to the public of that day the fact that the action takes place in a pseudo-popular milieu, among those theatrical peasants who were to figure so prominently in the bergeries, romances and pastorales of the late eighteenth century, seemed a bold innovation. A certain style had been created which, once established, was to be characteristic of the French opéracomique which now had an independent status of its own. For some time to come, however, works of a transitional nature still looked back to the vaudeville and still more to opera-buffa. Michel Blavet's Le Jaloux corrigé (1752) borrowed textually from the intermezzi the greater part of its musical substance. Dauvergne, in Les Troqueurs (1753), assimilated their style so successfully that he was able, repeating a stratagem adopted by Couperin, to pass his work off as that of an Italian composer. After the ruse had been discovered, the piece continued to be so successful that the Opéra, feeling itself in danger, forbade the 'Théâtres de la Foire' "to perform pieces in one or more acts with music throughout". This meant that recitative between the airs would not be allowed, which had the effect of making the alternation of sung and spoken scenes compulsory in opéracomique, a rule to which it has conformed ever since.

Now that the somewhat complicated circumstances surrounding its origin have been described, I shall outline much more broadly the history of a *genre* in which French composers have excelled and which has undoubtedly influenced the development of the lyric theatre abroad (cf. to take only one example,



A. M. Ott: Portrait of Joseph Haydn.



Francesco Guardi: Concert. circ. 1782. Munich, Pinacothek. The concert takes place in a Venetian convent, one of the four convents.

or ospedali, celebrated for the excellence of their orchestras.

Mozart's Bastien et Bastienne), although once it reached its maturity it no longer raised any musical problems of importance.

It should not be forgotten, moreover, before we go on to consider the classical examples of French opéra-comique, that Gluck was their rival, and at one time surpassed them in a series of scores composed between 1751 and 1764 at the instigation of Count Durazzo, general administrator of the Viennese theatres. But this was not directly connected with the evolution of French opéra-comique of which the first truly representative master was the Neapolitan Duni (1709-1775).

Arriving in Paris in 1757. Duni inaugurated his career in France with *Le Peintre amoureux de son modèle*, prefacing his score with the following curious announcement: "Whereas in Paris an author (Rousseau) has tried to show that the language spoken there is not fit to be set to music, I, an Italian living in Parma, have written all my music to French words. I have come here to pay homage to the language which has inspired me with the melody, sentiment and imagery." He continued until 1779 to produce agreeable works, some of which held the stage for a considerable time; they were mostly in a light and lively comic vein, although some, like L'Ecole de la Jeunesse ou le Barnevelt français 1765 inclined towards a 'dramatic and tearful' style which seems to be a belated echo of a style that Nivelle de la Chaussée had introduced into the non-musical theatre.

At the time when Duni was beginning late in life his Parisian career, two composers, twenty years younger, who were going to enrich opéra-comique with its first masterpieces. Philidor and Monsigny were making their début in this field.

François-André Danican Philidor 1726-1795 belonged to the third generation of a dynasty of excellent musicians; he had studied with Campra, had had a big motet, Lauda Jerusalem, performed at a Concert Spirituel, written music for the Théâtres de la Foire and made a big name for himself as a chess-player when the success of Blaise le Savetier, on a libretto by Sedaine, was the turning point in his career. His music at first was considered startling. According to Framery Journal de Musique, 1770 "the public, astonished at having their ears filled for the first time, thought they were being deafened... He was accused of not being able to write a melody because of the simplicity of his aria-



Horemans: Portrait of a musician. Munich, Pinacothek.

reproached with the fulness and expressiveness of his orehestration. These main characteristics will be found, in everincreasing measure, in Le Soldat Magicien, Le Jardinier et son seigneur. Desinite success came with Le Maréchal ferrant, Sancho Pança, Le Bûcheron, Le Sorcier and Tom Jones a "lyric comedy", of which the overture, of symphonic proportions, is very remarkable, and the descriptive scenes (especially the hunt) extraordinarily vivid, although the voice is never misused. It has been said, with reason, that the 'amoroso' in Tom Jones' farewell to Sophia has a Mozartian Havour; the septet, the a cappella quartet and the recitative in which Sophia expresses her distress are masterly.

Monsigny 1729-1817; was a much less skilled craftsman than Philidor. He began a an amateur, worked at theory for a lew month, and then made his début at the St. Germain Fair with Les Avenx indiscret: 1759, followed by Le Maitre en droit and Le Cadi dupé, which Gluck

had treated with greater artistry and inspiration. His personality as a sensitive and spontaneous melodist found its full expression when he began to collaborate with Sedaine who provided him with the librettos of On ne s'avise jamais de tout (1761), and, among half a dozen other works in the same vein, an authentic masterpiece, Le Déserteur (1769), which in its emotional intensity foreshadows the modern lyric drama.

Formation of the classical instrumental style: souata, symphony and quartet

While eighteenth—century operatic forms were agitated by these revolutions in the lyric theatre, instrumental music was undergoing transformations no less profound, not entirely uninfluenced by opera. A classical spirit was discreetly making itself felt, and was soon to find its full expression in Haydn and Mozart. It should be noted here that this had nothing in common with the literary classicism that flourished under Louis XIV, the purpose of which was to subordinate the passions to order and reason. It is true that in music an effort was being made to approach structural problems more methodically and to cultivate a harmonious symmetry of form; but the content within the form was becoming increasingly human, and more and more latitude was being allowed for the lyrical expression of personal emotions. It is important not to under-estimate this factor when studying the period during which the modern sonata, symphony and quartet were being developed.

The history of these innovations is not a simple one, although they are not far removed from us in time. European music by then had reached a point in

time, forming, as it were, a hinge between two styles. Bach and Handel were at the end of their careers, and still upheld (especially Bach) the prerogatives of polyphony. At their sides, and bound to them by ties of friendship, lived and worked Georg Philip Telemann. Nothing can convey more strikingly the ferment of conflicting tendencies at that time than the enormous range of works produced by this tireless and prolific creator, rivalling Orlando di Lasso, who in two years, round 1704, wrote no less than 200 French overtures in addition to other vocal and instrumental pieces! Although an accomplished contrapuntalist, like his colleagues (Handel said of him that he could compose a motet in eight parts as easily as writing a letter) he nearly always chose the new 'galant' style, and the recent revival of his Pimpinone of 1725, on the same plot as that of La Serva Padrona, produced eight years later (1733), shows that he possessed as light and lively a style, and as much sense of the theatre as Pergolese.

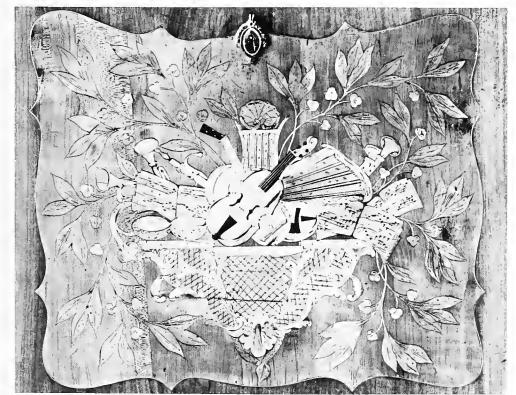
In order to make an exhaustive study of this problem of origins, it would be necessary to show what was new in the way of expressive content in the sonatas and concertos, still cast in the old forms, of the great violinist-composers such as Tartini, Locatelli, Leclair, Pisendel, Veracini, Nardini and Pugnani. It would not be incorrect to describe Locatelli as the precursor of Paganini, or to suggest that there are passages in Veracini that foreshadow Beethoven, but the scope of this book obliges us to confine our attention to the most obvious transformations which are mainly of a morphological order.

I have referred above to the reversal of the instrumental balance in the sonata,

initiated about 1734 by Mondonville: first came the sonata for violin and bass continuo, which then gave way to the sonata for harpsichord and violin, and later for harpsichord or pianoforte alone. About the same time the structure of the sonata allegro underwent an important modification. Up till then it had been based on a single theme which derived material for its development from itself, or else was embellished by accessory passages of a virtuoso nature; now the 'second subject' makes its appearance. It is probable that this 'second subject' was at first looked upon by those who first introduced it experimentally as a means of enriching the musical substance and making it possible to obtain contrast and variety. It was left to Beethoven to make the principle of contrast the essence of the bi-thematic sonata by giving the two themes the character of antagonists whose conflict lends dramatic interest to the allegro movement.

The invention of this 'second subject' is generally attributed to Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, and it can be found in the collection of his sonatas dated 1742. Traces of it exist, however, in more or less episodic form, in the sonatas for harpsichord and violin obbligato of J. S. Bach (c. 1720) and in the works of Leclair, D. Scarlatti and, more systematically, those of Giovanni Platti, author of a collection which no doubt preceded the sonatas of C. P. E. Bach. But it was he nevertheless who established the bi-thematic principle, both by his persistent use of it and by the intrinsic musical value of the works in which he used it.

Instrumental writing was tending more and more towards accompanied melody.





Dancing master's violin, made in 1783 by Johannes Cuypers at The Hague. The Hague, Municipal Museum, from the collection of musical instruments.

Composers steeped in polyphony, like the elder sons of J. S. Bach. Carl Philipp Emannel, and above all Wilhelm Friedmann, could not give up counterpoint altogether, but they combined it with vertical harmony. Their younger brother, Johann Christian, adopted the 'galant' style upon which Mozart was to model his own, and which soon became general throughout musical Europe.

Most of the sonatas of this period (1740-1775) were written in this style, more often decorative than lyrical; but in some of them, those by C.P.E. Bach for example, a new, pre-romantic note is sounded which explains why the harpsichord was abandoned in favour of an instrument better fitted to express emotional states—the pianoforte.

Musical Instruments. Inlaid panel. 18th cent. Paris, Decorative Arts Museum. The symphony, on the threshold of the classical era, was so like the sonata in form that it was commonly called a 'sonata for orchestra'. But the definition was not really valid until the latter part of the eighteenth century. Previously, the word *sinfonia* had been used quite for a long time to be Giovanni Battista Sammartini (1698-1775), a very gifted musician, possessing a poetic imagination and a lively and elegant style, whose first symphony was performed in Milan in 1734 with enormous success. But the discovery of 18 symphonies in



W. A. Mozart: Title page of original edition of the Grande Sonate à quatre mains. (Köchel 521). 1787.

as loosely, if not more so, as the term sonata. As regards the musical entity it represented, the complexity of its origin accounts for the vagueness of its appellation. The symphony in embryo is to be found no less in the ouverture and instrumental episodes of primitive opera than in the concerto, the suite or the sonata for several instruments "à fortes parties", as they are designated in the old publishers' catalogues. It was the operatic overture, more especially the Neapolitan overture whose form—allegro-adagio-allegro-had been established by Alessandro Scarlatti after the revival in 1696 of one of his youthful operas Dal male il bene, that made the most important contribution. As this type of overture gradually developed, it became the custom to detach it from its opera and use it as a concert piece.

As to who deserves the credit of having written the first symphonics expressly intended for the concert room, it is impossible to say with any certainty. All over Europe between 1715 and 1750 there were hundreds of orchestral works in existence which corresponded more or less to our idea of a symphony, either in their form or their orchestration.

Who gave the lead? Probably Italy, and the pioneer in this field was believed

W. A. Mozart: Così dunque (Köchel 432). Autograph MS. 1783, Paris, B.C. manuscript by Vivaldi, composed between 1716 and 1730, makes it dillicult to dispute the priority of the latter. These symphonies, moreover, are perfect examples of the pre-classical type; they have three movements, treated in a different style from that of the concerto, the instruments of the string quartet playing in their most sonorous register, excluding the high position and using

simple and efficient bowing, and little or no ornamentation, such as tremolos and other figurations said to have been discovered by the Mannheim school. The themes, often based on the common chord or scale, have that definitely tonal character so often met with in the allegro movements of symphonies by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.

In addition to Sammartini and Vivaldi, many other Italians made their contribution, notably Galuppi, Porpora, Pergolesi and Boccherini.

Meanwhile French composers had not been idle. Though their symphonies may be nearer to the dance-suite or seem to foreshadow what was later to become the 'symphonic poem' (for example, the Elements of J. F. Rebel, 1737, in which the description of chaos reminds one of the beginning of Haydn's Creation), their chief merit lies in the freshness and abundance of the thematic invention, lively rhythms, and an apt use in the orchestration of the different timbres in contrast to the usual lack of system in their choice. The symphonies of Mouret are interesting in this respect.

There remain the Germanic countries and Bohemia, which have for long been considered to be the nursery of the classical symphony. An Austrian school, numbering among its members G. Matthias Monn, G. Chr. Wagenseil, and Leopold Mozart, produced some symphonies which in the maturity of their style and orchestration equal those of the Mannheim masters, to whom I am now coming, after first noting that as early as 1725 a Swedish musician, John Agrell, had composed symphonies with oboes, trumpets, flutes and horns, of poor musical quality, it is true, while before 1740 the Moravian Mica had written better ones.

If Mannheim is often credited with priority in this field, this is due not so





Mozart and his family. Engraving after the picture by J. N. della Croce, 1781.

much to the intrinsic value of the works which originated there, as to the splendid performances they received at the hands of an orehestra reputed to be the best in the world at the time. The Czech Jan Stamitz (1717-1757), who had been entrusted by the Arch-Duke with the direction of the orchestra, recruited the most experienced virtuoso players and imposed a strict discipline in performance thanks to which he was able to obtain an incisiveness of attack and nuances of a precision hitherto unknown. He has been credited with the 'invention' of the crescendo, which is absurd. as singers, violinists and oboists had practised it for a long time. But Stamitz was the first to employ systematically an orchestral crescendo. His works, which are well constructed and elegantly turned out, if not conspicuous for their originality, played an important part in establishing the symphony in four movements, with the opening allegro in the form of a sonata, the finale usually a rondo, and the minuet placed between the adagio and the finale. Like the symphonies of the other "Mannheimers", Holzbauer, Karl Stamitz Jan's son), etc, they were published, not in Mannheim, but in Paris, which was at the time a particularly active publishing centre.

## Joseph Haydn

Joseph Haydn wrote no symphonies before 1759 at the earliest. Consequently it is not necessary to interpret literally the title of "Father of the symphony" which is frequently bestowed on him. He had been preceded by the abovementioned composers and by many others as important as C. P. E. Bach, Boccherini and Gossec who had had a symphony performed at the *Concerts Spirituels* as early as 1757. But it was he who perfected this form and gave it classical status, and that is more important than strict chronology.

Born on March 31, 1732 at Rohrau in Austria, Haydn at the age of eight entered the choir-school of the Cathedral of St. Stephen in Vienna. After a period of hard work and poverty during his youth, he embarked on the career of Director of music in the houses of the aristocracy, beginning with the Count Morzin and then, after 1761, transferring to the Esterhazys in whose service he remained until 1790. This post gave him material security and access to a small



Poster announcing Così fan tutte. Vienna, 1790.

orchestra which enabled him to carry out experiments to his heart's content. Thanks to this arrangement he produced an impressive quantity of music, most of it designed for the ceremonies and divertissements which took place in the sumptuous houses of his employers in Vienna, Eisenstadt and Esterhaz. From these centres his works soon began to circulate, and were published all over Europe with such success that copies and arrangements began to appear in great numbers, including many that were full of mistakes together with a certain number of apocryphal compositions, more or less feeble imitations of his style. Towards the end of his life he was looked upon as the supreme arbiter; he was only just over 50 when Mozart, at the height of his genius (1785) dedicated to him his six finest quartets in terms as respectful as they were affectionate.

The major events in his life were his two long visits to London (1791-1792 and 1794-1795) which were in the nature of a triumph and, on his return to Vienna, the first performances, eagerly awaited and received with transports of enthusiasm, of his two great oratorios, the Creation (1798) and the Seasons (1801). After that he practically ceased composing. The last years of his life were spent peacefully, disturbed only, a few

days before his death (May 31, 1809) by the siege and surrender of Vienna.

His vast output, which has the rare merit of showing no signs of hasty or careless workmanship, so often the penalty of extreme fecundity, had defied all attempts to classify it methodically for a long time. Today nearly 890 instrumental works including 104 symphonics and 83 quartets are listed, besides some of questionable authenticity. As regards the vocal music this may be estimated, without any great risk of error, to consist of 18 operas, 14 masses, 3 oratorios, about a hundred sacred and secular works of lesser importance, and about 620 pieces for one or more voices.

After having won universal admiration, the value of Haydn's œuvre has been most unjustly minimized. It was fashionable to look upon Haydn as an "embryo Mozart", just as Mozart was falsely represented as a mere forerunner of Beethoven. A careful analysis of their respective techniques shows that Mozart in his apprentice years took Haydn as a model. Haydn, on his side, after reaching maturity was in many respects obviously indebted to his young, talented rival.

Haydn was the 'Father of the symphony' not because he introduced into it the minuet (Albinoni had already had the same idea), but because he left upon it the imprint of his strong personality as he did upon the three other conventional movements: the opening allegro, where he shows his unflinching hostility to stereotyped formulae and introduces thematic development which he handles with an unprecedented wealth of imagination and technical mastery; the slow movement, where he often substitutes a theme and variations for the customary 'lied' investing it with far more feeling than any of his predecessors did; and the finale in which his originality is second only to his spontaneous gaiety and an absolute sureness of touch.

He has also been called the "Father of the string quartet" and this too, is true, subject to the same reservations. Provided, too, that we remember that the originality of the string quartet lies in its being composed of four instrumental voices, alike, yet differing from each other, and not in its formal structure which is no different from that of the sonata, its origin going back to the sixteenth century when, in imitation of the vocal ensembles an instrumental art was created grouping viols, and later violins, in the same way as a quartet of voices.

From the beginning to the middle of the eighteenth century a number of composers, especially in Italy, wrote quartets with the harpsichord as continuo, but so well contrived for the strings that the harpsichord became less and less necessary. It was still used, however, except in a set of six quartets by Alessandro Scarlatti, of 1725, which were, exceptionally, specifically intended for two violins, violetta (viola) and vio-



W. A. Mozart: Frontispiece to libretto of The Magic Flute showing entrance to the Hall of Initiation. Pub. Vienna, 1791. Below, Mozart: The first interpreters of The Marriage of Figaro, Vienna, 1786.

loncello senza cembalo (without harpsichord). But this formation will not be met with again until the first quartets of Boccherini, composed in 1761 and published in 1768 under the title of Sei sinfonie o sia quartetti per duo violini, alto e violoncello obligati. These were the first of the series of 102 quartets of Boccherini which have come down to us. Haydn, who was to compose 83 quar-

tets, had preceded him, if we accept the date of 1755 which historians have assigned to his earliest quartets. But these are still very near to the old form of the suite, and it is not certain that they had any influence at all on Boccherini. In any case, these two great artists had a mutual esteem and admiration for one another which they did not conceal. It is unlikely that the question of the paternity of the quartet ever caused them any concern. Like them, we can safely leave it in suspense.

In the classical line, after Joseph Haydn, the personality of Mozart is so outstanding that one is tempted to pass directly from one to the other as if, apart from them, there was nothing of importance in the musical life of the second half of the eighteenth century. But this would be too sweeping a generalization and unjust to an epoch which had produced a number of talented musicians, some of whom were near geniuses. While studying the history of the lyric theatre and of instrumental forms, we had occasion to refer to several distinguished musicians who flourished during this period. Among those who have been either omitted or only referred to in passing, we owe a debt of reparation to several great composers whose only fault was to bear too illustrious a name. Such a one was Michel Haydn (1737-1806), Joseph's younger brother, author of some thirty symphonies, several operas, and an imposing quantity of chamber music, but above all of some sacred works which Mozart often took as a model; some of these have been attributed, quite plausibly, to his elder brother. A similar case is that of several of the sons of J. S. Bach who were perhaps over-estimated in their life-time, in so far as they were generally considered by their contemporaries to he superior to their father, but were looked upon by succeeding generations as mere epigoni. Thanks to the gramophone, a more equitable view is now being taken of these composers. They





deserve to be taken into consideration, if only in order to underline the diversity in one and the same generation, and even in the same family, of the aesthetic tendencies amongst which Mozart had to make his choice.

Wilhelm-Friedmann (1710-1784), the eldest son of J. S. Bach, an organist and composer of the first rank, after a brilliant start to his career, died in conditions of extreme poverty. According to a persistent legend that has grown up round his name, he was a kind of wild bohemian, given to every form of vice; in reality it would seem that he was more than anything a victim of misfortune, largely due to his suspicious and unstable character. What remains of his music, much of which has been lost, shows originality, often bordering on genius, and characterized by a combination of contrapuntal science, directly inherited from Johann Sebastian, and a boldness in harmony, form and expression which foreshadow, or even surpass the innovations of the Romantic school.

We know more about Carl-Philip Emanuel (1714-1788), the fifth child of the first marriage, on account of the part he is said to have played in the stabilization of sonata form, to which his elder brother had also largely contributed. His compositions include: oratorios, 24 Passions, Psalms, lieder and secular cantatas and theoretical treatises, one of which, Versuch über die wahre Art, das Klavier zu spielen met with great success. He was, however, above all a marvellous virtuoso and improviser at the piano and clavichord, and enriched the keyboard repertory with 52 concertos, more than 200 sonatas, and separate pieces some of which are reminiscent of Couperin, e.g. La Complaisante, Les Langueurs tendres, L'Irrésolue, while the Rondo he entitled Abschied von meinem Silbermannischen Klavier (Farewell to my Silbermann clavichord) (1781) has quite a Beethovenian flavour.

Johann-Christian (1735-1782), the youngest son of J. S. Bach's second marriage, differed profoundly, in every respect, from his father and brothers; he was a cosmopolitan, making his career in Italy and England, with occasional visits to Paris or Mannheim; he was a convert to Roman Catholicism; he wrote for the theatre; while as regards his style, he abandoned polyphony in favour of an Italianate style in which melody predominates, but which is not, strictly speaking, the so-called 'style galant'—or if it is, is an example of that style at its highest level. Although he may have abandoned out-worn contrapuntal formulae, he is too much of a musician to be content with vague har-

◀ Alessandro Longhi: Portrait of Cimarosa.

monic 'padding' between the melody and the bass; he gives the intermediate voices independent parts to sing so that a figured bass and a harpsichord were just as useless as they were in the quartets I mentioned just now. Mozart owed much to him.

#### Mozart

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart came into the world at Salzburg on January 27, 1756, 24 years after the birth of Haydn; he died in Vienna 18 years before Haydn on December 5, 1791. In the course of this short life he produced, after only a very few apprentice years, an almost unbroken series of masterpieces. Everyone is familiar with the story of his early career as a child prodigy, but we should do well to remember that his marvellous gifts were wisely disciplined and developed by his father Leopold, an undistinguished composer, but an excellent pedagogue who has been falsely accused of being a sort of avaricious and narrowminded impresario. It is true that he exhibited his son all over Europe with a legitimate pride (Munich and Vienna in 1762, Paris in 1763, London in 1764 and then Italy) but he never neglected his health, his moral development or his musical education. He could only be reproached with not having attempted to break down the indifference shown by the young Wolfgang to anything not connected with his art. In the child's letters to his sister and his parents there is nothing to show that he took any interest in scenery or historical monuments or that he had any desire to improve his education, apart from music about which he had an insatiable curiosity. During his first visit to Italy at the age of eleven he was passionately interested in the composition of the orchestras, the range and character of the voices and the technique of the instruments; he listened with an extremely critical ear; he copied or, if the score was not available, learnt what he heard by heart (he memorized after a single hearing Allegri's Miserere). At every moment of his career he assimilated the styles of composers with whose works he had made himself familiar-Schobert, Abel, Handel, Johann-Christian Bach (one of those who had made the greatest impression on him) and a transmutation took place, turning them into authentic Mozart.

There was no branch or type of music which he left untouched and everywhere, without wanting to appear 'modern' in any way, he sounded a new note and revealed unsuspected possibilities. His audacities are never stressed. He does not intend that his hearers should know anything about problems which have been solved perhaps with

the utmost difficulty. His harmonies, on analysis, may be extremely bold, but he has no wish to offend the ear. He is sparing with his modulations, and reserves his most obvious dissonances for the climax of a drama or a dramatic symphonic development (e.g. the last apparition of the Commander in Don Giovanni, a few bars in the finale of the G minor Symphony), but he never dwells on them too long. Indeed, one of the chief characteristics of his art is its extreme reserve. Whereas Mozart the man is capable of the most incredible trivialities (cf. his letters to his cousin Maria-Anna-Thekla), the musician is severely controlled, and shuns the emotional outpourings better suited to the confessional to which the Romantics were so addicted. His personal emotions very rarely come to the surface in his compositions: at one of the most unhappy periods of his life he wrote Così fan tutte.

Volumes have been devoted to a dissection of his works. Nearly all the influences he came under or sought at any time have been traced; the progress, and often total metamorphosis he achieved in every branch of his art has been demonstrated; his creative imagination and exquisite feeling for formal and total balance have been extolled; in the end we are disarmed in the presence of what can only be called the Mozartian miracle -the intuition of his genius thanks to which, in the simplest and outwardly quite commonplace piece, by virtue of an infinitesimal melodic inflexion or the slightest change of harmony he is able to achieve effects of such originality, spontaneity, or strength, that they remain undimmed by the passage of time. I am thinking of such things as Cherubino's airs in The Marriage of Figaro, the duets of Don Giovanni and Zerlina, La ci darem la mano, Vieni un poco in questo loco, or the trio in Così fan tutte, Soave sia il vento.

It was through the theatre that Mozart reached his widest audience. With Idomeneo, Figaro, Don Giovanni, Così fan tutte he enriched Italian opera with masterpieces far superior to the best works of Galuppi, Jomelli, Piccini, Salieri. With Il Seraglio, and the Magic Flute he did the same for German opera which was still in its infancy: there had been, however, a German adaptation, under the title of Der Teufel ist los (The Devil to pay), of an English operetta, the musical arrangement having been made in 1752 by an obscure violinist, J. C. Standfuss. After that, Johann Adam Hiller, who has been compared to Monsigny, had produced a very successful series of Singspiele whose simple charm was well adapted to the taste of the day. One of these pieces was Die Jagd (The Hunt) (1770) which was attractive enough for Albert Lortzing to revive it, with a few adjustments, more than half a century later. In the realm of Grand

Opera, Ignaz Holzbauer, Umlauf and others had made some not altogether negligible attempts. But, as Goethe remarked, "Il Seraglio has eclipsed all the others."

In the opinion of Mozart scholars, the instrumental music is at least as rich as the dramatic works; moreover, there is a dramatic element below the surface in very many passages in the symphonies, quartets, and still more in the concertos. The 23 concertos which Mozart composed for piano and orchestra represent the summit of his entire instrumental production, at least so far as the orchestra is concerned. It must not be forgotten that Mozart was a virtuoso of the very first rank, that it was to the piano that he confided those expressions of feeling he so rarely allowed to appear in his music, and that thanks to the opportunities the concerto offers of a synthesis between 'egoistic virtuosity' and symphonic self-sufficiency, between technical prowess and powers of expression, and between a strict style and quasi-improvisation, he had at his disposal almost the entire resources of musical drama without being bound by its restrictions.

It only remains to be added that neither the sovereign beauty of his compositions nor his prodigious talent as an executant were able to preserve Mozart from the misery to which his improvidence and total lack of practical sense reduced him. He died, in poverty and almost alone, on December 5, 1791 in Vienna, and was buried in a pauper's grave.

Soon after the death of Mozart, Western music crossed the threshold of a century whose early years were stamped with the overpowering personality of Beethoven. The same period saw the birth of the Romantic movement, foreshadowed here and there in the works of precursors like the eldest sons of J. S. Bach, W. Friedemann and Carl Philip Emanuel; glimpses of it can even be caught from time to time breaking through the apparent serenity of Mozart.

### The new virtuosity

Before embarking on this new stage, we have to consider a certain number of elements in musical life at the time, personalities as well as circumstances, coinciding with the careers of the first great 'classical composers', or overflowing into the nineteenth century while still belonging in spirit to an earlier age. In the first place I would call attention to the fact that the period that had just closed was particularly rich in talent—a subject to which a more exhaustive study might well be devoted. How many musicians, now seen to be

far inferior to Mozart, were there who were not only considered by their contemporaries to be almost on the same level, but who actually did, when at their best, reach the standard of what might be called his 'mass production'! For example, Wagenseil, Dittersdorf, Vanhal, Myslivecek and, in North Germany the brothers Graun, Johann Gottfried (a prolific and often inspired symphonist), Carl Heinrich, author of numerous operas and the very fine oratorio Der Tod Jesu, the brothers Benda, of Czech origin (one of whom, Franz (1709-1786) revived the art of violin playing in Germany while Georg Anton (1722-1795), wrote mainly for the Church and for the theatre) and finally, Johann Peter Schulz (1747-1800) the most interesting composer of lieder prior to Schubert.

Meanwhile instrumental virtuosity had never ceased to gain ground, aided by the progress made in the manufacture of instruments and the increase in cultural exchanges. The travelling virtuoso was by now a familiar figure. To the Concerts Spirituels in Paris came an unending stream of violinists, cellists, flautists and bassoonists from all over Europe, while the Frenchmen Bertheaume, Paisible and Cardon went as far afield as Russia, where the Italians had preceded them.

As regards the fabrication of instruments, only the stringed variety played with a bow had for some time past found their final form (since the middle of the sixteenth century the bow alone had benefited from definite improvements). Wind instruments, on the other hand, were greatly improved in the course of the eighteenth century. Horns were given greater independence by the addition, about 1750, of an extra 'crook' which enabled them to play the harmonics of several notes; the clarinet, invented by Denner before 1700 but hardly used until about 1750, became flexible enough for Mozart to write for it a brilliant concerto (K. 622) and to assign to it the leading part in the Quintet (K. 581). Flutes and oboes were capable of greater speed and homogeneity but, like the brass instruments, had to wait until the nineteenth century before benefiting from the inventions (Bochm for the flute and Sax for the brass) to which they owe their present form and technical improvements.

The pianoforte, which made its first appearance, as I mentioned above, at a concert given by J. C. Bach and was played on the same year by a certain M<sup>He</sup> Lechantre at a Concert Spirituel, remained, in the hands of the Viennese and French makers, an instrument that produced a pleasing but delicate sound, and was well fitted for the music of J. C. Bach, Mozart and Clementi. The strength which Beethoven demanded from it soon led to important progress

being made in its solidity and volume of sound.

The instrument had called for a new kind of virtuosity, differing from that required for the harpsichord both in its technique and means of expression. I mentioned above the first composervirtuosos to adopt the pianoforte, beginning with Schobert. A great artist of the next generation, whom Mozart detested but who was later to be admired by Beethoven, enriched the literature of the piano, and not only from a pedagogic point of view: Muzio Clementi (1752-1832). His instrumental works certainly opened up new paths, but there is much that would repay study in his sonatas, fantasias, fugues and even in his pastiches which are extremely interesting from a purely musical point of view. The recent revival of his symphonies has done much to rehabilitate this creative artist who for a long time was looked down upon as a mere pedagogue.

The violonists, who had played a most important part in the creation of the early sonata, concerto and symphony, still made their influence felt to an appreciable degree, though certainly less than before. One has only to consider what Mozart owed to his compatriot Fraenzl, to the Italians Nardini and Viotti (from whom he borrowed certain concerto openings in the 'heroic' style), to Regina Strinasacchi, for whom he wrote the Sonata in B flat (K. 454), and to Frenchmen like Gaviniès who had introduced, before Mozart, the 'romance' into instrumental music.

There were others, who are now almost totally forgotten although in Mozart and Haydn's lifetime they were celebrated throughout Europe and admired for their brilliant virtuosity which, though it may have been somewhat superficial, was much less commonplace than might be imagined. I am thinking more especially of Mestrino, of Lolli and of Jarnovick (Giornovichi), the last two having been as famous for their eccentricities as for their talent, though both were gifted both as instrumentalists and composers: there is, in nearly all the score or so of Jarnovick's concertos which have survived, at least one movement, generally the adagio, which deserves to be rescued from oblivion.

During this same pre-Beethovenian period, the French lyric theatre continued to develop, especially in the direction of opéra-comique. It cannot be said that it was profoundly affected by the revolutionary turnoil.

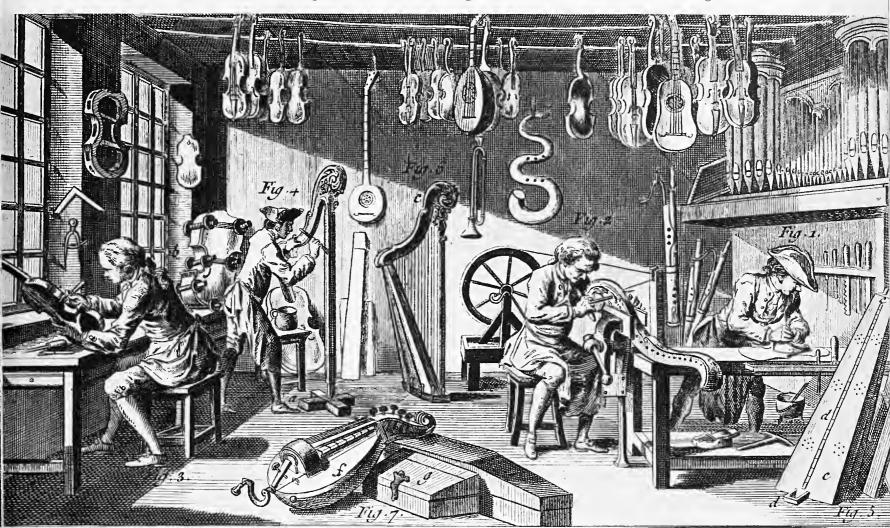
The aspirations of the period were reflected in works dictated by events, some of which, inspired by genuine feeling and with a style of their own, have survived, e.g. the Marseillaise of Rouget de l'Isle (1792) and the Chant du Départ of Méhul (1794). Others, such as Gossec's monumental Te Deum would be worth performing, and there are some

fine things in the hymns, cantatas and patriotic songs turned out with more or less conviction by this musician of the Revolution: L'Abîme du pouvoir of 1794 becomes in 1797 Le Pardon des injures — chant religieux sur la destruction de l'Athéisme...

Of greater importance were the operatic works of Grétry (1741-1813). This native of Liége, who had for long been settled in Paris, had written and had performed there some 70 operas or opéras-comiques, after Huron, his first great success, had been given in 1768

being one but in serious opera he attained real grandeur: *Horatius Coclès*, *Uthal*, and especially *Joseph* (1807), his masterpiece, which was admired by Beethoven.

Lesneur (1760-1837), who is chiefly remembered as having been Berlioz'



An instrument maker's workshop. Engraving from the Grande Encyclopédie (1751).

### Developments in the theatre

But this does not mean that the traditional lyric theatre was neglected, and it is noteworthy that, even after the Revolution, it remained in the direct line of evolution that had begun under the old régime. Although the first generation of composers of opéra-comique had disappeared (Duni had died in 1775; Monsigny gave up writing two years later and Philidor alone went on until 1788) its place had been taken by another generation of musicians more numerous, no less rich in talent and subscribing to the same aesthetic principles. Among them may be mentioned, for the record, Gossec who was a symphonist of some importance and the author, as we have seen, of some patriotic works of an edifying nature, but whose only contributions to opera were his Offrande à la liberté (1792), a dramatization of the Marseillaise.

at the Comédie Italienne. Among his most popular works were Le Tableau parlant, Lucile, Zémire et Azor, La Rosière de Salency, Les Deux Avares, and Richard Cœur de Lion (1784). Nearly all are marked by a fresh and spontaneous melodic invention and are not lacking in dramatic interest; but the poverty of their harmony has prevented them from surviving which seems surprising on the part of a musician who had thought and written a lot about his art.

A scarcely more accomplished musician, Dalayrac (1753-1809), was also a prolific composer (he wrote some fifty works for the stage) and possessed of a melodic gift which ensured the success of Nina ou la folle par amour, Camille ou le souterrain and Maison à vendre. Méhul (1763-1817) was his superior in technique, inspiration and personality. Like Dalayrac and Grétry, he excelled in the lighter categories as well: his Irato, which he passed off às an Italian opéra-bouffe, had all the appearance of

teacher, has the same qualities as Méhul coupled with a certain romantic exuberance.

As to Cherubini (1760-1842), a Florentine established in Paris since 1788, his most significant works date from around the last years of the eighteenth century-Lodoiska in 1791, Médée in 1797, Le Porteur d'eau in 1800 and Anacréon in 1803. A rather narrow conservatism, for which he has been justly reproached, did not prevent him from writing some remarkably well-constructed music or from being by far the best symphonic composer of this school. The overtures to Médée and Anacréon made a great impression on Haydn, Beethoven and Weber, and in recent years Toscanini performed them in his concert programs with great success.

Finally, to conclude this brief survey of the French lyric theatre, mention should be made of the earlier works of Adrien Boieldieu (1775-1834) ten of whose operas are anterior to 1800, the date of his first big success, Le Calife de Bagdad. But the works on which his fame

principally rests came later.

But in France, as in the rest of Europe, Italian opera and, still more, opera-buffa, pursued their triumphant career. Giovanni Paisiello (1740-1816), already mentioned in connection with his career in Paris, endowed the lyric stage with more than 100 works. (He also composed 35 masses, 12 symphonies, etc.). Domenico Cimarosa (1749-1801), whose Matrimonio segreto is still in the repertory, was almost as prolific. Both wrote lively and attractive music, well orchestrated and constructed, which often recalls Mozart, using instinctively the same vocabulary, or borrowing directly from it.

Both composers also played a part in the cosmopolitan musical movement which in eighteenth-century Russia was paving the way for the advent of an

authentic national school.

# The lyric theatre in Russia in the 18th century

Opera had made its début in St. Petersburg in 1736, introduced there by the Italian troupe of Francesco Araja

who had been invited by the Empress Anna Ivanovna. Other Italians were summoned to Russia during succeeding reigns, notably that of Catherine II. The latter had no ear for music at all, which caused her much distress; in a letter to Grimm she declared: "I long to listen to and to like music, but in vain; to me it's just a noise and nothing else. I should like to offer to your new medical society a prize to be awarded to someone who will invent an effective remedy for insensitiveness to harmonious sounds." At least she did all in her power to endow the lyric stage with a splendour worthy of her empire. Early in her reign she had in her service Galuppi (1765-1768) and later Paisiello, Sarti, Cimarosa and Martin y Soler.

But she did not only favour Italian musicians. French opéra-comique, especially works by Philidor, Duni, Monsigny, Dalayrac and Grétry, had flourished from 1764 onwards, not only on the stage of the Imperial theatres, but also among amateur companies and in educational establishments like the Smolny Institute, reserved for orphans of noble families.

The German Singspiel was also represented and—as further proof of the popularity of French opéras-comiques—the same German companies also per-

formed pieces composed on librettos adapted from these of Zémire et Azor or Le Tableau parlant, etc., and sometimes even works by Duni and Grétry simply translated into German.

About the same time, opéra-comique in the Russian language made a timid start with works imitating successful French works in this field, although the composers often introduced airs borrowed from Russian folk-lore. But in 1772 an opéra-comique entitled Aniouta was produced which was entirely made up of Russian popular songs from beginning to end. It has been wrongly attributed to Fomin who was only just eleven years old at the time. However, this was only an intelligent anticipation. Fomin (1761-1800), who had studied at Bologna, was to be, with Michel Matinsky (1750-c. 1820), the first composer of entirely Russian operas-influenced, no doubt, by Western models, but already possessing a definitite national idiom. Fomin had the signal honour of setting to music a libretto written by Catherine II entitled Vassily Boyeslavovitch (1786). As for Matinsky, his St. Petersburg Bazaar was a triumphant success and remained in the repertoire until fairly late in the nineteenth century. None of these works, however, has any great intrinsic

# The nineteenth century



Ludwig van Beethoven: Sketch for the tenth Bagatelle, op. 119. Autograph MS, Paris, Conservatoire Library.

### Beethoven

The reason why the figure of Beethoven stands out in such sharp relief against the background of musical history, and even History itself, is to be found, above all, in the grandeur of his creative achievements, but also, to a very large extent, in the man himself, that indomitable character whose impact entirely revolutionized the age-old relations between the musician and the society of his time.

Ludwig van Beethoven was born on December 15 or 16, 1770, in Bonn where his family had been living since 1733. He was presented in a 'romantic' light in early years; during his lifetime an Italian Dictionary of Music (Palermo, 1814) described him as follows: "Beethoven, who is said to be the natural son of Frederick William H..." He was, quite simply, the son of a tenor who sang in the chapel of the Prince-Elector, a rather mediocre musician and teacher whose one ambition was to make his son into an enfant prodige. To this end, he subjected him to a severe and somewhat incoherent discipline, but less cruel than is sometimes alleged, for the young Ludwig adored music and probably suffered most from being forced to study and practise exercises when he would have preferred to improvise or play by heart.

After having been taught for some years by his father and various undistinguished teachers he was fortunate enough, towards the end of 1780, to become the pupil of Christian Gottlieb Neefe, an organist and distinguished theoretician who introduced him to J. S. Bach's Well-Tempered Klavier and trained him to deputize for him officially as Court organist when he was only twelve years old! The same year (1782) a firm in Mannheim published a set of Variations for the Harpsichord on a March of Mr. Dresler composed by a young amateur Louis van Beethoven aged ten years old (in order to make his son appear more precocious his father took two years olf his age, and Beethoven believed until his fortieth year that he was born in 1772). Neefe, besides being organist, was also in charge of the Court orchestra, and so Beethoven was able, when accompanying rehearsals at the harpsichord, to become familiar with the dramatic repertory. He had begun to give lessons in order to supplement

the family budget which was severely strained by the improvidence of his father, who drank and was unable to keep his pupils. But the young Ludwig had friends on whom he could count for support and encouragement outside his unhappy home. Already in 1782 Helena von Breuning, the widow of a State counsellor, with her three sons and her daughter Eleanor (with whom he was later to become infatuated) offered him a second home. A few years later, to-wards the end of 1787, he was to meet the young Count Waldstein who was to be his first patron. For Beethoven, whose life was in many respects an unhappy and troubled one, almost constantly enjoyed the protection of influential people. But this in no way implied any subservience on his part, As Wagner has so well expressed it, he felt himself, in regard to society, to be completely independent: "he felt he was a conqueror, and knew that the only place for him in the world was that of a free man. The world would have to accept him as he was.'

Isidore Neugass: Portrait of Ludwig ► van Beethoven, Private collection.



This independent disposition which later was pushed to such extremes as to give him the appearance of a misanthrope, was only an additional attraction in the eyes of the Viennese when, in November 1792, Beethoven came to settle in the Austrian capital. This eccentric young man, with no respect for polite conventions but unmistakably gifted as a pianist and improviser, was feted by the aristocracy. He made friends who were sufficiently attached to him to put up with his rebuffs. His friendships with women nearly always became violent infatuations invariably ending in failure, for reasons which are still a subject for speculation. But at least all this was to enrich his music: sorrow, and the struggle to overcome it, are among the chief stimulants to Beethoven's inspiration. Man's greatness, he believed, is measured by his ability to meet his destiny with courage. The greatest happiness is found in suffering bravely borne.

He was to have his share of suffering. Ear trouble from which he had suffered since 1796, the result, no doubt, of a neglected illness, grew steadily worse after 1800 and left him, at the height of his creative powers, to face the worst affliction that can befall a musiciandeafness. It was the conviction that he would be unable to escape this fate that inspired him to write, in October 1802, the Testament of Heiligenstadt, a long letter addressed (but never sent) to his brothers, and full of forebodings of death. But the fighting spirit in him reasserted itself, and it was in this same month of October 1802 that he began to sketch the 'Eroiea' Symphony.

His method of composition was not unconnected with his philosophy of



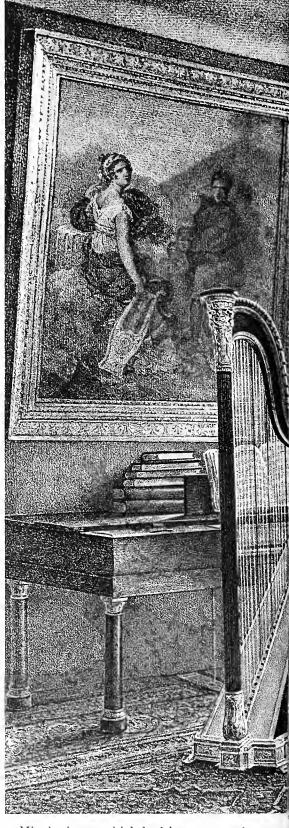
strife. A marvellous improviser, he renounced in his written work the facile temptations of improvisation. Mozart composed almost invariably in an unbroken flow of inspiration, as if taking down dictation: Beethoven was like a sculptor modelling his clay in a hundred different ways before succeeding in giving material shape to the figure envisaged in his imagination. One can follow in his notebooks the gradual evolution of themes the first sketches for which sometimes preceded by several years the final version; for example, one of Leonora's airs in Fidelio had been drafted and re-drafted no less than eighteen times!

Three periods can be distinguished in his evolution, namely (approximately) from the beginning to 1800, from 1800 to 1815, and from 1815 to 1827. Already in his earliest 'manner' where he is relatively near to Haydn and Mozart, his personality asserts itself. Not that he rejects traditional forms; he is and always will be rooted in classical culture; but he modifies and enlarges these forms to suit his requirements. Only now are we beginning to understand how much Beethoven's ample developments owed to the late quartets and symphonics of Haydn.

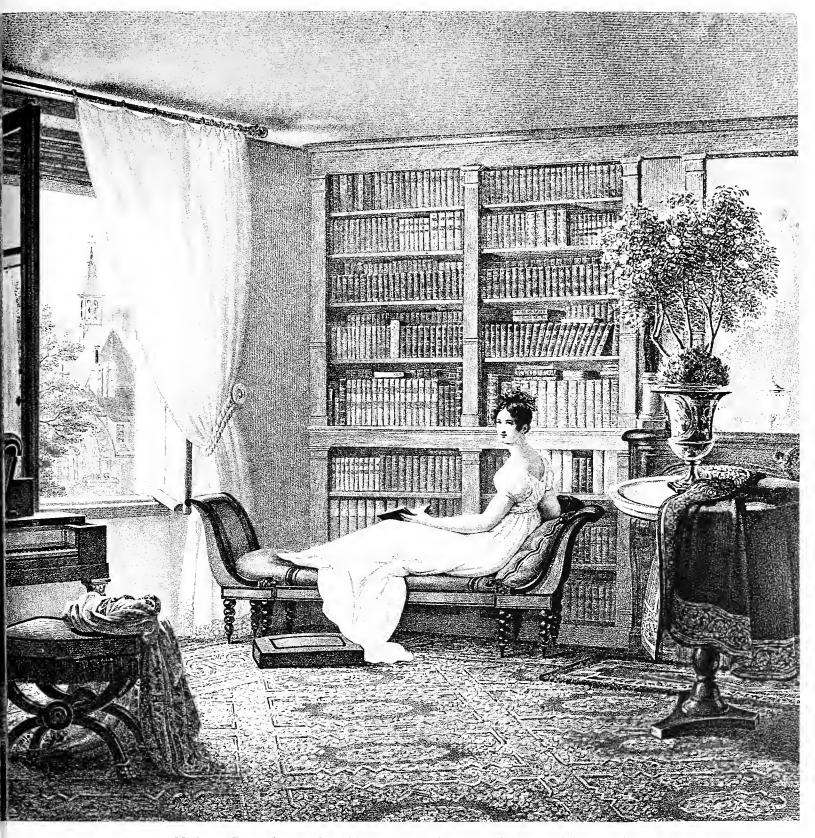
It is the spirit of the works that has changed. Beethoven grew up in the atmosphere of "Sturm und Drang", the movement that derived its title from a play by Klinger and that symbolized, in the eyes of its promoters, the revolt of the individual against convention, subordination and slavery. It was also influenced by French revolutionary ideas. Beethoven very soon ceased to write Court music. He wanted to address a vast audience to whom he could communicate his joys and hopes and anger. At the same time he made few concessions to the sentimental transports of the Romantics, who nevertheless tried to annex him. "Emotional displays", he wrote in 1812 to Bettina von Arnim, "are only fit for women. In a man, music should strike fire from his spirit." In this way he raised the whole debate to a higher level, and transposed his own personal struggle to the scale of the whole human race, and dreamt of bringing to it joy and universal brotherhood, as if music could recover its old magic properties.

His last works are couched in a language that was incomprehensible to the majority of his contemporaries and that has ballled even musicians nearer our own time such as, for example, Debussy who remarked in a letter to Pierre Louys: "There is no doubt that Beethoven's XIVth quartet is nothing but a 'leg-pull' from beginning to end..."

L. Boilly: Portrait of Boieldieu. Rouen Museum.



His deafness, which had become total by 4815, is perhaps partly responsible for certain eccentricities in the writing characteristic of the works posterior to that date; there is no doubt that it helped him to concentrate his thought still more in that kind of contemplation which Wagner compared to that of a seer. It would, however, be a mistake to imagine him as being continually wrapped up in his philosophical meditations. Right up to his death, which occurred on March 26, 4827, in spite of years of illness, family worries and an



Madame Récamier at the Abbaye aux Bois. Engraving by Dejuine. Paris, B. N.

(unfounded) fear of poverty, his "conversation notebooks" show that he still kept up with his circle of friends and was more devoted than ever to nature, with her forests and rivers, besides being interested in musical events and in the thousand and one little incidents of everyday life, including gastronomic details which he noted with precision.

I do not propose to reproduce here the catalogue of his works as this is readily available; his greatest achievements are, together with Fidelio and the Missa Solennis (which he considered to be his greatest work), the nine Symphonies, the thirty-two Sonatas for Piano and the seventeen Quartets. Instrumental music predominates, as he found this medium adequate for the expression not only of his religious and mystical aspirations but of the whole living drama which he carried within himself. Pierre Louys remarks: "The XlVth Quartet is not a quartet: it's a

drama in one act and eight movements—overture, cavatina, melodrama, air, romance, trio, march and a final patriotic chorus." Whatever it was meant to convey, that observation does quite correctly put the emphasis on a characteristic aspect of Beethoven's instrumental music, namely its primarily dramatic nature. I have already pointed out that in the Sonata, as he conceived it, the contrast between the two main themes becomes a pathetic struggle between two

personalities in sound which soon seem to come to life.

It is only in the 'last period' works that the human aspects of the drama tend to become obscured. Beethoven has created means of expression which are both more intense and less passiona long time after his death. But a few musicians in his lifetime admired him passionately, and among them the greatest, no doubt, of all the Romantic composers, Schubert.

Born in Vienna in 1797, Franz Schubert as a child was surrounded by music.

manuscript of a quartet dated 1814 bears a note: "Finished in a few hours". In a single year, in 1815, he produced 144 lieder, in addition to two Masses, two symphonies, five operettas and several dozen pieces for chorus or various instruments.

His fame rests principally on the Lieder of which 603 have come down to

Lieder of which 603 have come down to us, some of which are organized in cycles, e.g. Die schöne Müllerin and the Winterreise. Seventy are settings of poems by Goethe, his favourite poet; among the finest are the Erlkönig, written at one sitting in an afternoon in 1815, Ganymede, and Prometheus. These lieder from first to last are far superior to anything of that kind that had been done hitherto on account of the beauty of their melody, the intensity of their expression and the eloquence of the piano part which follows the voice in close collaboration and is not merely an accompaniment. Schubert has at his disposal an infinite number of melodic designs and accompaniment figures, the simplest of which may acquire an extraordinary significance through one of those unexpected modulations of which he possessed the

Strangely enough, his gifts were unproductive in the field of opera. It was not that he did not attempt this form: he wrote no less than fourteen operas, Singspiels and incidental music of which only that composed for Rosamunde (1823) has survived. On the other hand, his instrumental music at its best is as highly thought of today as the lieder. Four of his nine symphonies, including the 'Unfinished' and the C. major (with what Schumann called its "divines longueurs") are mainstays of the repertory. The same could be said of three of the twenty quartets, the Octet for strings, clarinet, horn and bassoon, the Quintet for piano and strings (the "Trout"), the





C. M. von Weber conducting an opera at Covent Garden. Lithograph by Hullmann, after J. Hayter.

ate. Considered separately, these works seem to belong to another world than those of Haydn or Mozart; and yet they are nothing but the ultimate stage of an evolution which was already traced at the very beginning of Beethoven's creative career. It is equally certain that in the course of this creative process a new kind of musical thinking was evolved, and that nothing that has been written since Beethoven can be explained, or would have been possible without him.

He did not represent the spirit of romanticism to the extent that some would have us believe, but he prepared the way for it in many respects, and notably by elevating, as he did, to the greatest heights the art of sound which, in the eyes of romantic poets and philosophers was the art 'par excellence'.

## German romanticism : Schubert, Weber

If Beethoven is today the object of a cult that sayours somewhat of fetichism, that is because it was a long time before he was understood and his influence did not begin to make itself felt until quite His father, who was a schoolmaster and a good violinist, was always at home to chamber music adepts, and Franz was taught at home the rudiments of harmony, and of violin and piano playing. At the age of eleven he entered the Imperial chapel as a chorister, where his master was the celebrated Salieri, but after that, though without giving up his music, he was obliged to spend four years as assistant master in his father's school. In 1817 he decided to devote his whole time to music. From that date onwards he led the life, outwardly, of the perfect bohemian. He never settled anywhere, or found a steady situation of a fixed abode. All through his life he was helped by devoted friends. In return, any money he received from publishers slipped through his fingers for the benefit of the community. He lived in this happy-go-lucky fashion until about his 26th year when he was stricken by a disease then thought to be incurable. He continued to produce; there were times when his health seemed to improve and his optimism was revived, but the end was near. He died, aged 31, on November 19, 1828.

His musical precocity, his facility and fecundity were almost miraculous. The

G. Rossini: Photograph by Nadar. Heugel Coll., Paris. Piano Trio in B flat, the Sonatinas for violin, and the Sonatas, Moments Musicaux, Variations, Ländler, etc., for piano. All these works are based on classical models, They are romantic both in sentiment and in their almost magical feeling for colour and pure sound which was something that had been exploited by neither Mozart nor Beethoven.

It was on the lyric stage that German musical romanticism found its earliest and most complete expression. This was manifested in the first place by the choice of subjects. Themes borrowed from history or classical mythology were abandoned in favour of folk-lore. Above all, the atmosphere was different. The cult of the marvellous was beginning to find favour-but not unnatural marvels such as apparition of monsters, cataclysms, gods descending from the clouds, etc., which were a feature of opera at Venice or Hamburg. These prodigies of pure stage-craft, which anticipated the 'high spots' in our spectacular music-hall shows, were replaced by an atmosphere of mystery which pervaded the entire drama. The forces of nature, water and woodland sprites, etc., had a part to play, and invisible and omnipresent spirits governed the thoughts and acts of the characters. Another almost in variable feature of this kind of drama was that it extolled with fervour the merits of Germany, her land, her people and her culture.

Ever since the end of the eighteenth century the authors of Singspiele had followed this line. An Oberon by Wranitzky (1790) was followed by the Sylphes and the Kobold of Himmel, some half-dozen Fausts and several imitation Magic Flutes. In 1816 the poet-musician E.T.A. Hoffmann in his Undine foreshadowed Weber, and the same year saw the production in Prague of Ludwig





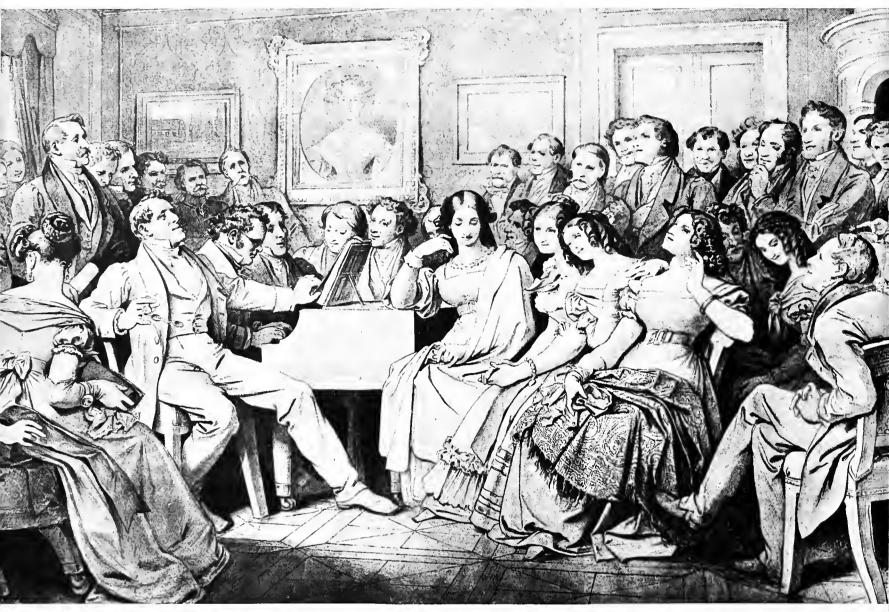
J. A. Vallin: Young violoncellist. 1810. Oil painting. Paris, Musée Marmottan.

Spohr's Faust. Here the style was more sober and the inspiration perhaps less fervid, but it contained a certain Dance of the Sorceresses which was already characteristic of the tendencies which were to be exalted by Weber.

Born in 1786 at Eutin, Carl Maria von Weber had led as a youth the adventurous kind of life dictated by the calling of his father, an excellent musician, but an unrepentant bohemian, orchestral conductor and director of travelling theatrical companies, the nucleus of which was supplied by his own family. Always on the move, he nevertheless managed to make it possible for his son to study with various masters, including Michael Haydn and the Abbé Vogler. At the age

G. Tivoli: Portrait of Bellini. Bologna, G. B. Martini Conservatory.

of thirteen the young Carl had already composed a "grand romantic comic opera" Das stumme Waldmädchen, and at seventeen he was conducting the Breslau theatre orchestra; but this did not prevent him from trying his hand at criticism and novel-writing, or from working at lithography with its inventor Senefelder and writing a quantity of vocal and piano music, while at the same time leading a disordered life, much to the detriment of his already fragile health. He was in prison for debt when he completed Silvana, a second and improved version of the Waldmädchen (1810). A happy marriage enabled him to settle down in about his thirtieth year, and the few years that remained to him to live (he died in London in 1826) saw the creation of Freischütz. Euryanthe and Oberon.



Moritz von Schwind: A Schubert evening in the house of Joseph von Spaun. Schubert is at the piano accompanying the singer Vogl. In the background, a portrait of Caroline Esterhazy. Drawing. Vienna, Schubert Museum.

Apart from his fame as a conductor and virtuoso pianist, Weber, who composed music of every description, wrote for different instruments concertos. sonatas and pieces in free form, several of which have remained in the repertory, the most popular being the Invitation à la Valse, a veritable Poem for the piano which has been orchestrated by both Berlioz and Weingartner. But it is his operas that have won for him his place in history. After some happy experiments like Silvana and Abu-Hassan, Der Freischütz, produced in Berlin in 1821, stands out as the first of his great accomplishments. It is yet another Singspiel, intersperdes with the spoken word.

With Euryanthe (1823) it was Weber's intention to endow Germany with her own form of Grand Opera, in reaction against the Italian School. In spite of a ludicrous libretto, the work had a decisive influence on the future of lyric drama; its influence on Wagner is undeniable. As for Oberon, which was composed for Covent Garden and, owing

to the exigencies of the London stage, east again in the mould of opéra-comique, including spoken recitative, Weber was only just able to complete it a few months before he died. He had intended to transform it into a Grand Opera for the German stage; attempts to do this have since been made in several countries. In these three works Weber was mainly concerned with the principle of unity. He wished to bring about a synthesis of all the arts from which nothing could be subtracted without seriously harming the whole. He achieved this by developing the recitatives and by eausing certain themes to recur, not as mere reminiscences, but as definite characterizations of persons and situations.

In Euryanthe there are eight such leitmotic, and there is no doubt that he was able to invest each character with a musical personality of its own, in which he was aided by a really novel feeling for instrumental colour. The clarinets, horns and flutes, employed in his orchestra with a complete knowledge

of their resources, reveal hitherto unsuspected powers of expression. There is no rhetoric or development after the manner of Beethoven; the music follows the action closely, while creating all round it a poetic atmosphere thanks to which the feebleness of the libretto can be forgotten or redeemed.

Not for a long time shall we find again such a combination of talent and craft-manship. It will be attained by neither Marsehner (1795-1861) (whom Weber admired and whose style resembled his own), nor Lortzing, nor Flotow, nor Otto Nieolai whose Merry Wives of Windsor is occasionally performed, nor even by Schumann in his solitary opera Genoveva.

We shall not find it again before Wagner who, while still a child, had been roused to enthusiasm by Freischütz and whose stage works would be inconceivable without the example of Weber.

Kupelweiser: Schubert and his friends ► (the "Schubertianer") 1820. Schubert is standing in the back.

### Italian revival: Rossini

Romantic opera, as Weber conceived it, was essentially German opera. Steeped in folk-lore and history, he esteemed it his duty to exalt the patriotic feelings which had been aroused by Fichte's Address to the German People after the defeat at Jena. The adoption of such a policy did not improve his chances of usurping the place of the operatic repertory, based on French or Italian traditions, which continued to flourish throughout Europe quite unaffected by the revolutionary upheaval and scarcely at all by the newly fledged Romantic movement.

The early years of the nineteenth century are dominated by the figure of Gasparo Spontini (1774-1851). He came to Paris in 1803; his opera La Vestale, produced in 1807, was a triumphant success. The work, which differed in every respect from what he had hitherto composed for the Italian stage, showed the influence of Gluck on the young musician who had at last been able to hear the two Iphigenias and Alceste. But it was in no sense the work of an epigone. It revealed a dramatic temperament in which nobility and grace were combined with strength well under control and a gift for orchestration superior to that of Gluck. Two years later Ferdinand Cortès was almost equally successful, although this was due to less purely artistic considerations (the management had hired for the production a number of horses from the Franconi Circus!). But neither in Olympie (1819) nor in the operas composed later for Berlin, did the composer attain the emotional grandeur of *La Vestale*, the only one of Spontini's operas which has resisted the ravages of time and which has even had the honour of being recently recorded in its entirety. now on he had the reputation of being the best composer of his generation. Then in 1816, in Rome, came the extraordinary adventure of the Barber of Seville which met with a hostile reception on its first night from a public unwilling to accept an opera on a subject



Franz Schubert: Fragment of Aeschylus. Autograph MS. 1816. Paris, Conservatoire Library.

Yet the vogue of Spontini was not to be compared with that which was to be enjoyed by one of his compatriots less than ten years after the first production of La Vestale. Born at Pesaro in 1792, Gioacchino Rossini had already written an opera at the age of 14; by the time he was 21 he had had eleven produced including The Silken Ladder, Tancred and The Italian Girl in Algiers; and from

already treated by Paisiello, but was given a more favourable hearing the next night, enthusiastically applauded after that, and soon launched on a triumphant career round the world, beginning with London in 1818 and Paris and New York the following year.

Although improvised in less than a fortnight, not without some borrowings from his own and one or two reminis-





cences from the works of others, the Barber brought the old-style Italian opera-buffa to its highest peak of perfection. Neither Paisiello nor Cimarosa had such direct powers of melodic invention to fit all situations and characters, or so strong a sense of comedy, or such skill in the treatment of voices and orchestra, or such technical virtuosity as that shown in the two great finales. Sometimes one feels in the presence of Mozart. Some admirers of Mozart try to avoid a comparison which in their eyes is sacriligious by systematically and surprisingly under-estimating Rossini. It is obvious that Rossini sometimes descends to facile expedients which Mozart would not have tolerated, but when one hears the Barber conducted by a Toscanini, a Tullio Serafin or a Giulini, one feels much less sure that there is such a gulf between its composer and pre-Don Giovanni Mozart.

The Barber of Seville was followed by a score of operas some of which are again enjoying a vogue (La Cenerentola and Count Ory). The last operas, which were written for the vast stage of the Paris Opéra tended to take the form of 'Grand Opera' as exemplified in Auber's La Muette de Portici, produced in 1828. The formula was wearing thin. Without attempting to portray, as Gluck, Mozart and Méhul had tried to do, the pathos and nobility of humanity, composers were intent on offering the public airs and vocalises designed for effect, elaborate stage settings with vast processions, cataclysms copied from the old Venetian operatic school (in Auber's La Muette there is an eruption of Vesuvius!) ballets having no connection with the action of the play and a lavish use of brass in the orchestra, on the stage and in the wings -so many "effects without a cause", as Wagner so cuttingly expressed it.

It was in this style that Rossini composed William Tell (1829), but with a mastery that to a large extent atones for the faults inherent in the form itself. After this, to everyone's surprise, while still at the height of his fame, he gave up composing—or rather he composed no longer for public consumption. The exhumation, long after his death in 1868, of songs and piano pieces written during his last years prove not only that his inspiration was still lively, but that his harmonic sense had become so refined that it now almost rivalled that of Bizet and Gounod.

At the time when he gave up writing for the lyric stage, two of his compatriots were making a brilliant *début* in that field. Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848) was perhaps his superior in the facility and speed with which he worked: one of his best scores, *Don Pasquale*, was written

■ Eugène Delacroix: L'Amoureuse au piano (La Malibran?). Water-colour. Jean-Louis Vaudoyer Collection, Paris.

in eight days. He left 71 operas, an almost equal amount of sacred and secular vocal, as well as instrumental music. Out of all this enormous output, only L'Elisir d'Amore (1832), Lucia di Lammermoor, La Favorita and La Fille du Régiment, in addition to Don Pasquale, have survived. At his best he has a dramatic force which is not to be met with in Italy until the mature works of Verdi. He can keep the balance wonderfully between tragedy and comedy. His style is elegant when he takes pains to make it so (he taught counterpoint), but he is not concerned to display his skill, but only to show off the voices to the best advan-

The principal source of emotion in this kind of operatic writing is, indeed, bel canto where melody reigns supreme, either in its broadest and simplest forms, or else enriched with ornamentation and flourishes of every kind. Such ornamentation, whether written or improvised, can be expressive. Too often it degenerates into stereotyped vocal displays which, when indulged in too freely by singers anxious to show off, end by destroying the composer's original inspiration.

The purest exponent of bel canto opera is Vincenzo Bellini (1802-1835). The fame which he acquired in the course of so brief a career and the admiration he aroused in the greatest musicians of his day, beginning with Chopin, seem surprising to us today, for his technique is very limited, his harmony elementary and his orchestration hollow and monochordal. His only assets are his gift of melody which, it is true, is of a very high order, and a fine ear for declamation, to which he always paid great attention. From time to time, at long intervals, Norma and La Somnambula are revived; but it must be admitted that they cannot hold the stage unless supported by international stars of the first order for whose benefit they are resuscitated.

# Paris and "Grand Opera": Auber, Meyerbeer

Spontini, Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini produced their best works in Paris where the musical movement in their life-time was more lively and more brilliant than anywhere else in Europe. These foreigners certainly contributed to the artistic renown of Paris, but it would be wrong to suppose that the capital at that time was nothing but a centre of fashion as well as being an agreeable place of residence. It was undoubtedly the cradle of a definite style, whose existence was recognized as late as 1865 by Wagner in a report which he submitted to Ludwig II of Bavaria:

"The style of the Paris school", he wrote, "is still the dominating influence on the taste of almost every nation... In Paris, Italians and Germans immediately become French; and the French, though with less aptitude for music, have always imposed their own taste so emphatically on the production of foreigners that even far beyond our frontiers this taste has left its mark on every work."

This Parisian style found its best expression in opéra-comique in which, during the Empire-Restoration period, the undisputed master was Boïeldieu. We have followed his career as far as the Caliph of Bagdad (1800). The success obtained by this charming work was to be often repeated on a still larger scale both in Paris and St. Petersburg, where Boïeldieu lived from 1803 to 1811. Here he wrote, among other successful works, Les Voitures Versées. On his return, Jean de Paris (1812) was warmly received, and he was in favour with the public until La Dame Blanche in 1825 which was a veritable triumph. The habitual freshness of his inspiration, the abundance of his melody and the clear and brilliant orchestration which characterized his style were now enriched by the added attraction of a fantastic element, not at all exaggerated and very different from Weber's fantasy, but wonderfully in keeping with the tendencies of a French form of romanticism.

Opéra-comique was also considerably enriched by Daniel-Esprit Auber (1782-1871) author of some 130 operatic acts, as well as ballets, songs and instrumental pieces of no great interest. In collaboration with Scribe he produced Fra Diavolo, Le Domino Noir and Les Diamants de la Couronne, all well written works in a style that is lively, even if it lacks the spontaneity we admire so much in Boïeldieu.

The name of Auber is especially linked with the creation of nineteenth-century international 'Grand Opera' of which the prototype is represented by his La Muette de Portici, first performed at the Paris Opéra on February 29, 1828. Indifferent to the aspirations of those followers of Gluck whose aim it had been to endow lyric drama with a firm structure and a sobriety of means inspired by the tragic theatre of antiquity, the new opera depended on purely external 'effects', prodigious feats of scenic elaboration and 'stunts' of the kind already mentioned in connection with William Tell.

What strikes us today as surprising is the absolute contrast between the impression of emptiness and artificiality produced on us today by this sort of operatic production and the enthusiasm it aroused at the time. (Rossini himself, at the height of his fame, was converted to the new aesthetic, and Meyerbeer, as we shall see, adopted it unreservedly.)

Still more astonishing is the admiration expressed by Wagner for La Muette de Portici. The fact that he extolled it in dithyrambic terms in the Revue et Gazette Musicale in 1840 could be due to opportunist motives; but in his Souvenirs of Auber written in 1872 after Auber's death, he praised in no less glowing terms "that uncommon conciseness, that violent concentration of form... The significance of his colour, the sureness and boldness of his orchestral effects, and his treatment of the chorus as a crowd that really plays a part in the drama..."

With the "Meyerbeer case" the discrepancy between the tastes of two succeeding epochs is just as flagrant. Born in Berlin in 1791, Giacomo Meyerbeer (his real name was Jacob Beer) had had a brief career as a pianist child prodigy and had written a few operas in the Italian style when, in Paris, he had the revelation of grand opera, lavishly produced, a sort of 'historic melodrama set to music' of which Auber had created the prototype. Robert le Diable (1831), Les Huguenots (1836), Le Prophète (1849) rivalled one another in their straining after 'effects'. In Robert le Diable the most sensational episode was a ballet mounted at midnight in the ruins of a monastery and danced by nuns who had come out of their graves! But the improbability of the action was offset by rapid movement, realistic declamation, powerful and highly coloured orchestration and, at certain moments highly charged with emotion, by music of such quality that Wagner himself, one of Meyerbeer's worst adversaries, was obliged to pay tribute to it. (He thought, for example, that the love scene in the 2nd Act of the Huguenot was one of the finest things in all opera.) After being praised to the skies in France by those of his own generation, and still admired there very much later (Vincent d'Indy at the age of twenty thought there was no one like him) but disparaged by Mendelssohn and Schumann, Meyerbeer today, it would seem, is unjustly helittled, for there are very few composers of a later date who have not benefited from his discoveries as regards orchestration and the handling of the chorus.

During his reign there were other composers who successfully exploited the same formula of grand opera: Halévy (1799-1862) with La Juive, and Ferdinand Hérold (1791-1833) with Zampa and the Pré-aux-clercs—works whose qualities of melodic and harmonic invention, coupled with a greater degree of poetical imagination than is to be found in the works of most of his contemporaries, make us regret all the more the brevity of his career. Although lacking that poetical vein which has sometimes caused Hérold to be known as the "French Weber", Adolphe Adam (1803-1896) has the high spirits, sim-

plicity and clarity which proclaim his kinship with the composers of opéracomique at the beginning of the century. Of the 53 scores that have survived, Le Chalet, Si j'étais Roi and the Postillon de Longjumeau had a place in the repertory for a long time; but he has won greater fame with a Noël ('Minuit, chrétiens!') of rather feeble inspiration, and with the ballet Giselle whose popularity is due to its choreographic associations rather than to any intrinsic musical value.

# German romanticism outside the theatre : Mendelssohn, Schumann

During the same period, while 'grand opera' was developing, a romantic movement, having no connection with the theatre, was taking shape, principally in Germany. It was closely connected with the literary movement by which it was originally inspired, and its chief protagonists, Mendelssohn, Schumann and Liszt, as well as their French rival Berlioz, all had literary leanings, like their predecessors Hoffmann and Weber.

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809-1847), the son of a rich banker who was a great patron of the arts, is perhaps the first example of a musician belonging to a well-to-do middle class family whose vocation was encouraged in every way by his parents. Care was taken, however, to ensure that his musical education did not prevent him acquiring a good general culture.

Although he showed signs of remarkable precocity, it was not until he was 24 that he really entered the profession, as an orchestral conductor at Düsseldorf. He was to die prematurely at the age of 38, after a short but well-filled career. Both at Leipzig, where he conducted the Gewandhaus concerts, and founded a Conservatory which had a European reputation, and in the various capitals he visited during his concert tours, he played a very active part in musical life, and was mainly responsible for the rediscovery of the works of J. S. Bach. As early as 1829 he conducted the first performance, since the death of the Cantor, of the St. Matthew Passion. His own music, the greater part of which is still in the current repertory, is especially remarkable for the purity of its style, already noticeable in the Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream composed at the age of 17, for the brilliance and transparency of the orchestral scoring, especially in the Scherzos, and for its somewhat facile melodic vein which it has been the fashion to despise-although a glance at what was then the staple fare in the best musical salons of the day might well bring about a change in this attitude. It is true his music never strikes a harsh or painful note, but it can attain grandeur (cf. the Organ Sonatas which are rarely heard), while the youthful élan of the Italian Symphony, the innovations in the form and instrumentation of the Violin Concerto and the simple charm of the Songs without Words all have their value, even if their romanticism seems tame by comparison with that which inspires the work of Mendelssohn's greatest admirer, Robert Schumann (1810-1856).

Schumann is the most complete incarnation of German musical romanticism. Steeped in literature, that of Goethe, Byron, Jean-Paul and Hoffmann, he was above all irresistibly attracted to music to which he decided to devote himself, after studying law for a short time. He dreamt at first of becoming a virtuoso pianist, but an unfortunate contrivance intended to hasten his technical progress half paralysed his right hand. He then turned with renewed ardour to composition, and at the same time founded a Review, the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, with the object of combating academicism and 'salon music' and helping genuinely creative musicians. The paper served as a forum for the valiant legions of the "Companions of David", the sworn enemies of the "Philistines". These Davidsbündler were the fruit of Schumann's imagination, his spokesmen and, to a certain extent, the idealized portraits of his friends. He himself figured among them in the dual aspect of the tender Eusebius and the impetuous Florestan, this typically romantic duality corresponding exactly to his unstable and tormented nature. Soon a charming feminine figure joined the ranks of the Companions in the person of Clara Wieck, a highly talented pianist whom Schumann finally married, after a long period of waiting and many romantic vicissitudes which have been related by his biographers. They have also told of the wonderful period of exaltation that followed these years in the 'forties, of the creative fever that brought forth his greatest works, and of the slow physical deterioration and first signs of madness in 1849 (heralded perhaps, as far back as 1842 by an attack of nervous depression which led to increasingly frequent erises culminating in 1854 in an attempt to drown himself, after which came internment in an asylum until his release by death in 1856).

It was Clara Wieck who inspired the best of Schumann's works, namely the compositions for piano, solo, or accompanied (the Concerto, C major Fantasia, Symphonic Studies, etc., and the little Kinderszenen in which he discovered new

J. D. Ingres: Portrait of Paganini. Drawing. 1819. Paris, Louvre.



sonorities and a new expressive medium) and the Lieder, whether single or set in cycles like the Dichterliebe and Frauenliebe und leben. But with the exception of an unsuccessful opera, Genoveva, which had only three performances, the remainder of his output—symphonies, symphonic poems, incidental and chamber music, ranks very high in the production of the nineteenth century.

# Chopin, Paganini, Liszt

Belonging to the same generation, we come now to a strangely isolated genius, of such originality that it has never been possible to connect him with any 'school' - Frederick Chopin (1810-1849). Born near Warsaw of a French father and Polish mother he began, as a child prodigy pianist whose precocity recalls that of Mozart, by undertaking a triumphantly successful concert tour across Europe. In 1831 he settled in Paris, which he rarely left except when his romance with George Sand took him to Majorca, although he paid a brief visit to England shortly before he died. Chopin did much to raise the status of the virtuoso at a time when the profession was largely in the hand of charlatans.

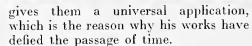
Until the end of the eighteenth century the art of the executant was linked to that of the composer, the latter almost invariably being his own interpreter. After that date, the development of concert-giving and the public's increasing predilection for exhibitions of technical prowess led to the rise of a type of musician who up to now had been very rare—namely one who was first and foremost a performer and not a composer at all, but who fabricated for his own use pieces of a very rudimentary

nature consisting mainly of airs and variations, fantasias, pot-pourris or concert studies designed for the sole purpose of exhibiting the player's technical skill. This kind of music 'for effect' was all the rage in the drawing-rooms of the 1830's, and musicians of talent and standing, such as Kalkbrenner, Herz, Döhler, Thalberg and even Liszt in his younger days, did not hesitate to demean themselves by writing it.

It fell to Chopin to reconcile virtuosity with music.

Like most of the great pianists of his day he wrote almost exclusively for his instrument, but he opened up for it a vast new domain and endowed it with a new language and unlimited possibilities of expression. His sound-world bore no resemblance to that of the classical composers. He rarely used the largescale forms perfected by them, or if he did, it was with the utmost freedom. Although first and foremost a melodist, he created a harmonic system designed for the sake of expression which was extremely bold but at the same time sounded so natural and unforced that even the most timid among his contemporaries were obliged to accept it. His melody often resembles, externally, the bel canto of Italian opera, but his ornamentation is the very opposite of a mere embellishment which can be discarded at will; it is an essential part of his thought, adding iridescence to the harmony, or suggesting a sort of immaterial improvisation performed by a singer of genius.

No music is more romantic than Chopin's, and none has ever reflected more faithfully a composer's changing moods, whether of melancholy, tenderness, amorous exaltation, or nostalgia for the homeland, and feeling of revolt and despair at the thought of its sufferings under oppression. And these confidences have an artistic character that



With Chopin, virtuosity is so impregnated with musicality that no distinction can be made between them. Nicolo Paganini (1782-1840), on the other hand, represents pure virtuosity, of so dazzling a description and so different from what had distinguished other famous violinists that the public was quite prepared to believe the rumour that he was inspired by the Devil. In reality, Paganini was only adopting and supplementing with additions of his own a whole corpus of more or less charlatanesque devices with which the Austro-Germans and Italians had long been familiar (Biber, Locatelli, etc.) and which he revived and rejuve-



Franz Schubert: Ave Maria. Transcription by Liszt.



J. Danhauser: Franz Liszt at the piano. At his feet, Marie d'Agoult: in the arm-chair, dressed as a man, Georges Sand; near her, Alexandre Dumas; behind them, Victor Hugo; in the background, Paganini and Rossini, Vienna, 1840.

nated thanks to his skill and sense of showmanship which together produced an irresistible effect. But it would be difficult to account for the admiration he aroused in musicians like Schumann, Liszt and Chopin did we not remember that he was keeping alive the tradition of the great improvisers, and that his magical powers of execution transfigured music of which only the bare bones are revealed in the printed page.

A parallel is sometimes drawn between Paganini and Franz Liszt (1811-1886). So long as we are only considering them from a virtuoso point of view this comparison can stand. But the musical personality of Liszt was vastly more impressive than that of his violinist rival.

At the tender age of 13, when he began his pianistic career as a boy prodigy, he was already a composer. Apart from his opera Don Sanche, produced at the Paris Opera in 1825, in which he was helped considerably by his teacher Ferdinand Paer, he had already composed Variations on operas by Rossini and Spontini, and an Allegro and Rondo "di bravura" which heralded an enormous output of some 700 works, some of which are largescale symphonic poems and concertos. His earliest works were mainly piano pieces written either to dazzle by a display of virtuosity or to arouse emotion through a rather superficial pathos. It was not long, however, before he gave up a virtuoso career, although in this he had been highly successful. The last

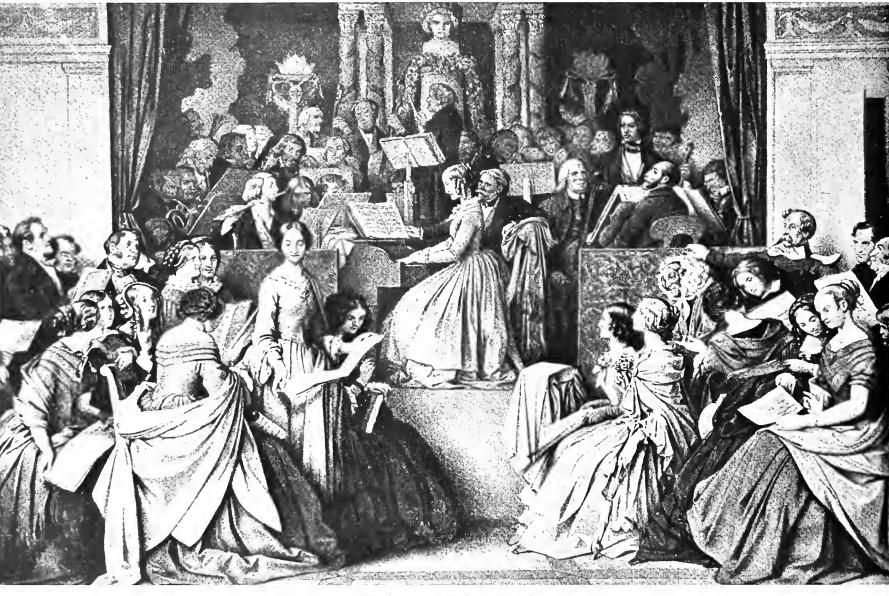
recital he gave for his own benefit was in 1847. The following year he went to Weimar, and during his twelve years stay there made it a centre of intense musical activities. He divided his time between composing, conducting the orchestra and teaching, appearing from time to time as a pianist in which eapacity he was unsurpassed. To this period belong the piano works in which pure virtuosity is made to serve a mature and original musical mind, less aristocratic than that of Chopin, and somewhat inclined to favour the rather facile turn of melody that disfigured his early works, though touched occasionally with genius. In these pieces he revolutionized entirely the technique of the piano, enriching it with increased power and volubility and

a variety of tone-colour which transformed the instrument into a miniature orchestra.

During the same period he was composing orchestral and vocal music, and there again showed himself to be an innovator of genius. In his twelve Sym-

# "The" French romantic: Hector Berlioz

Musical historians often associate Liszt, under the label of "neo-Romantic" with Hector Berlioz (1803-1869), the Germany, Russia) where he was covered with laurels, although on his return he was again an object of controversy and bitterly attacked. (A gifted writer, he was obliged throughout his life, to contribute musical articles to a number of newspapers, notably to the *Journal des* 



Moritz von Schwind: The Concert

phonic Poems, written under the influence of Berlioz' Symphonic Fantastique, he created a form that was less literally descriptive and more concerned with the poem's real meaning than with its picturesque details. The boldness of his harmony and orchestration, the flexibility he introduced into classical forms and his style of choral writing in his sacred music (masses, oratorios, psalms, etc., prepared the way for Wagner and most of the other masters of the second half of the century. Finally any account of his activities would be incomplete that failed to mention the campaign he continually carried on, with admirable tenacity and in a generous spirit of eclecticism, in favour of such musicians as Wagner, Berlioz, Schumann, César Franck, Smetana and Saint-Saëns.

only really great musician that France can claim during the barren years that preceded the revival inaugurated round about 1870 by Gounod, Bizet, Saint-Saëns and César Franck. Berlioz was very late in beginning his technical initiation; he was 23 when he entered the Paris Conscrvatoire, where he studied with Lesueur and Reicha. His unconventional style was the cause of his failing four times to win the Prix de Rome, which he was finally awarded in 1830. This was the starting point of a tumultuous career chequered with triumphs that rarely brought material advantages, as well as with resounding failures; by tempestuous love affairs, which his exuberantly romantic temperament usually turned into drama and by journeys to foreign countries (Austria, Débats, and his caustic pen brought him many enemies.) Though he may not have been so completely misunderstood as his imagination, already inclined to mythomania, led him to believe (official honours, membership of the Institute and the Legion of Honour came to him late in life) he was in the end a lonely and discouraged man.

Berlioz' works are all almost entirely orchestral or choral: they include nine Overtures, of which the best known is the Carnaval romain; two operas, Benvenuto Cellini and Les Troyens; one opéra-comique, Béatrice et Bénedict: the Symphonic Fautastique and Harold in Italy for orchestra alone; Roméo et Juliette, Célio ou le retour à la vie, and the Damnation de Faust for orchestra, chorus and soloists; and three works of

religious inspiration: the Requiem, the Te Deum and L'Enfance du Christ, a "sacred trilogy" in the form of an oratorio.

It is difficult to describe his work in a few words. Filled with admiration for Beethoven, and believing that he was progressing along the same lines, Berlioz created an entirely different art in which description plays a much more important part, although without breaking away altogether from classical symphonic form. He was in many respects an innovator, freeing his melody from the sacrosanct 'four-square' lay-out, juxtaposing unequal rhythms and risking harmonic progressions of doubtful orthodoxy, but often with the happiest effect. But it was in his imaginative treatment of the orchestra that his genius found its fullest expression. His orchestral gift enables him to calculate his effects with extraordinary accuracy. He obtains marvellous results from instrumental combinations which, on paper, appear to be meagre and incoherent and to which a piano arrangement never does justice. It is by these means that he succeeds in conjuring up worlds of fairy-like insubstantiality or of sombre and massive splendour. He has expounded the potentialities of timbre in masterly fashion in his Grand Traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes (1844), which may be considered as the source and origin of modern orchestral technique.

# Wagner and the lyric drama

While Liszt and Berlioz were developing instrumental music, Richard Wagner was bringing about a more radical revolution in the lyric theatre than any it had experienced since the beginning of

the seventeenth century. The first signs of any artistic talent he displayed were in the sphere of poetry and the non-musical theatre. It was not until 1831, when he had only received a few lessons on the violin and piano, that he started to learn counterpoint while still carrying

but finished Rienzi and composed the Flying Dutchman. In 1843 he was appointed Kapellmeister at the Saxon Court, in Dresden, where Tannhäuser had its first performance in 1845. Four years later he had to make a hasty departure on account of his revolutionary



Robert Schumann: Ending of Piano Quartet, op. 47. 1842.

on his philosophical studies, and it was between 1829 and 1832 that he wrote most of his purely instrumental works which show some talent, but no genius.

In 1833 he attempted his first opera Die Hochzeit (The Wedding) which was left unfinished and completed another, Die Feen (The Fairies). In 1834 he made his début as a conductor in the orchestras at Magdebourg, Koenigsberg and Riga. He next moved to Paris where, from 1839 to 1842, he existed precariously,



activities. Finding a refuge with Liszt at Weimar, he soon obtained a more or less permanent situation in Zürich. In 1864 he returned to Germany, thanks to the protection of the young King, Ludwig II of Bavaria. Two years later he was forced into exile again by a cabal, going this time to Triebschen. In 1872 he settled at Bayreuth where he built his theatre. From then on his career was one long triumph until his death in Venice in 1883.

Before examining the full significance of his work, it is necessary to draw attention to the vastness of his output. In addition to the operas already mentioned, and a certain number of sketches and pieces of secondary importance, he composed, writing both text and music, Lohengrin (1847), the four parts of the Ring (1854-1874: Rhinegold, The Walkyrie, Siegfried, The Twilight of the Gods), Tristan and Isolde (1859), the Master-singers (1867) and Parsifal (1882). His literary production (essays, critical articles, autobiography, etc.) runs to some 15 volumes and, as much of his correspondence has been collected, to another 20. It was during his exile in Zürich that he wrote his most important theoretical essays, Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft and Oper und Drama, and at the same time

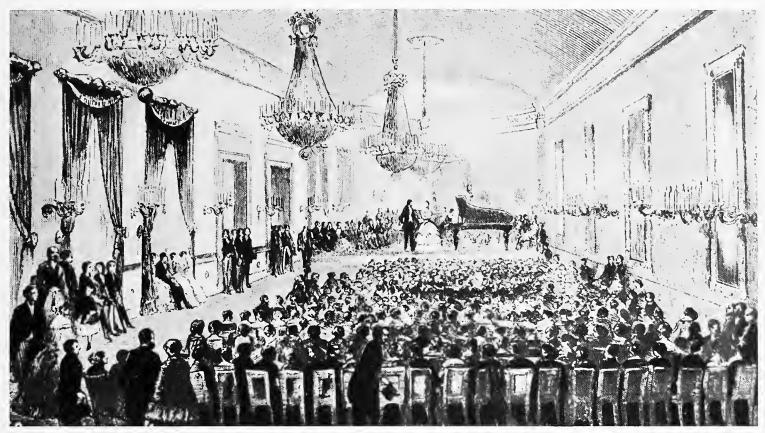
Opposite: Robert Schumann, after an engraving by Rumpf. 1846. Left: Clara Schumann, after Kneisse. 1842.



gave practical expression to his theories by composing the *Tetralogy*.

Rienzi was still a genuine "Grand Opera" in the Parisian style, with plenty of warlike pageants and processions, and "historic ballet" and, for a grande finale, a palace collapsing in flames over the

together the separation which oldfashioned opera had instituted between the dramatic element, almost exclusively confined to the recitatives, and the lyrical element reserved for the arias which generally held up the action. A "continuous melody", no longer obliged to Wagner did not invent the Leitmotiv. Monteverdi knew the power of a recurring theme, and Grétry had even formulated the theory; but Wagner amplified the procedure and gave it greater flexibility and a new lease of life by making it an essential element of his



The old Salle Pleyel as it was in 1838. From L'Illustration, June 9th, 1855.

heads of the principal characters. The music was divided into separate airs, duets and choruses throughout, whereas in the Flying Dutchman, and still more in Tannhäuser and Lohengrin, the score had become a homogeneous whole. Airs and ensemble numbers which could, if necessary, be separated still subsist, but they are organically linked with what precedes and follows them. The different scenes are part of a dramatic development, and the characters have their own psychology and exist as real human beings, which is not usually the case with the heroes of "Grand Opera".

It was during the Zürich period, when Wagner was becoming acquainted with Schopenhauer (several of whose ideas coincided with his own) and with Liszt's symphonic poems, that he evolved the form of lyric drama of which he had dreamt for a long time: The Gesamtkunstwerk, or comprehensive work of art in which music, poetry and scenery are all subservient to the central, generating idea. And yet music predominates, since German Romanticism has always conferred upon it supremacy over all the other arts. Henceforward it rejects al-

■ Eugene Delacroix: Portrait of Frederick Chopin. 1838. Oil painting. Paris, Louvre. conform to traditional proportions, reflects the course of events on the stage, as it used to do in Monteverdi's stile recitativo e rappresentativo, while a "continuous symphony" supports the voices. The orchestra, enriched with new instruments, especially in the brass section, acquires an unprecedented power of expression; it is no longer content merely



Frederick Chopin: Second Ballade for piano, op. 38. Autograph MS. Paris, Conservatoire Library.

to accompany; it expresses the psychology of the characters, and reveals to the spectator states of mind of which the hero himself is not always conscious. The *Leitmotiv* here is of decisive importance.

dramatic art. Far from being, as is sometimes stupidly and falsely asserted, a mere set of clichés, rigidly established and used in a purely mechanical fashion, the Wagnerian *Leitmotive* are living organisms, assuming as many forms as the ideas of which they are the musical equivalent (for very few of them are simply descriptive like, for example, the one that depicts the Walkyries' galloping horses).

The Ring is one of the most stupendous manifestations of Wagner's genius, but is by no means representive of all its aspects. While he was finishing the second act of Siegfried, Wagner fell in love with Mathilde Wesendonck and, in order to give musical expression to this passion in Tristan and Isolde, he invented a harmonic language in which chromaticism attains the extreme limits of compatibility with the tonal system: no finer tribute has ever been paid to the soundness of this system than by seeking in the direction of atonality the means of expressing anguish and obsession with death.

Yet another language is represented in the rich polyphony of the *Master*singers where Wagner, this time, is extolling a young and triumphant love and painting animated scenes of popular



Heetor Berlioz conducting. Satirical German engraving.

rejoicing, while at the same time he stigmatizes, in ironic fashion, the conservatism of the traditionalists which he himself had encountered in the course of his career. Finally, in *Parsifal*, a work of mystical inspiration composed during the last years of his life, he returns to an austerity of style which in conjunction with a somewhat hermetic form of symbolism, renders this work difficult of access even to experienced Wagnerians.

The vastness of Wagner's output, its revolutionary boldness and the effect it had on contemporary thought (more than 10,000 books, studies and articles were devoted to it during the composer's lifetime could not fail to have a decisive influence on the future of lyric drama and music in general.

This influence made itself felt in a variety of fields, and in unexpected ways.

Its earliest effects were felt outside the theatre. Everything new that Tristan and the Tetralogy had contributed in the way of harmony and orchestration soon found adepts, whereas the basic prineiples on which Wagner's dramaturgy depended-system of declamation, conception of 'continuous melody', expressive function of the orchestra, use of Leitmotifs, and the abolition of the old system of writing operas consisting of separate airs, ensembles and choruses strung together-were either partially and timidly adapted, or else rejected outright, up to the beginning of the present century.

In France "Grand Opera" and opéracomique remained faithful to the old system, but there were talented musicians who were able to accept these limitations without thereby sacrificing

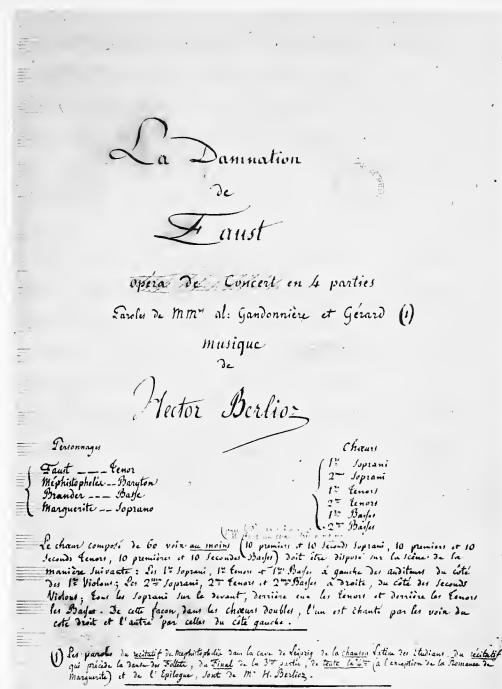
their originality. Such a one, for example, was Félicien David (1810-1876) who with his symphonic Ode, Le Désert, had introduced into the concert hall a new note of sober and genuine exoticism, and in his most successful stage work, Lalla-Roukh (1862), had had recourse to a more fantastic form of Orientalism by no means lacking in attraction. A far more accomplished technician, Ambroise Thomas (1811-1896) has perhaps less personality. When he attempts subjects of a grandiose or fantastic nature, such as Hamlet or A Midsummer Night's Dream, one can measure the gulf that separates him from, for example, a genius like Berlioz; but in an opérabouffe like Le Caïd (1849) and above all in Mignon (1866), the classic type of opera-comique, the purity of his style, the charm of his somewhat facile melody and the way in which his music is adapted to the dramatic situations are enough to account for the continued success of a work like *Mignon* which is not yet exhausted.

## A new lyric theatre in France: Gounod, Bizet and their rivals

Of far greater importance are the works of Gounod, a composer who is often under-estimated; for example, in Alfred Einstein's Short History of Music, in many respects an excellent work, Gounod is not even mentioned. And yet it was he who (since Berlioz' Benvenuto Cellini and Les Troyens had no repercussions in their day) prepared the way for a new type of French opera, far superior to any that had held the stage since the death of Rameau.

Charles Gounod (1818-1893) was a pupil of Halévy, Paer, and Lesueur. After winning the Prix de Rome, during his stay in the Eternal City he came under the influence of Palestrina at the same time that he discovered J. S. Bach. At that time he was thinking of becoming a priest, and his musical activities were centred round the organ and sacred music. He soon gave up the idea of entering holy orders, although he continued to write music for the Church. In 1851 he had had his first success with a Messe Solennelle, while at the end of his career his principal compositions included more masses, a Te Deum, a Stabat Mater, and, above all, two oratorios, Redemption and Mors et Vita which had a great success. In the meantime, however, he developed a vocation for the theatre. He did not, however, meet with immediate success, and it was





Hector Berlioz: Autograph MS. of title-page of La Damnation de Faust.

not until 1898 that Le Médecin malgré lui-one of his rare attempts at opéracomique and one of the best in the repertory—finally consolidated his reputation as a composer for the theatre. The following year Faust was produced at the Théâtre Lyrique before being staged at the Opéra, where it has remained solidly ever since, after more than 2000 performances. Apart from a few minor concessions to the taste of a public brought up, we must not forget, on Italian or Italianate opera, Faust seems like a new work. In its directness of utterance and emotional sincerity, rich orchestration and harmonic refinement (of which the Introduction is a typical example) it differs from the conventional "Grand

H. Daumier: Portrait of Berlioz. Versailles Museum. Opera" in every respect except for its retention of separate airs and self-contained ensembles, which moreover are linked together with a much greater feeling for dramatic propriety. Finally, all Gonnod's works, and especially Mireille and Roméo et Juliette, are distinguished by their melodic charm which has caused his vocal music to be taken as a model by the majority of the younger French school.

More favoured in this respect than Gounod, Charles Bizet (1838-1875) is considered by many historians to be entirely responsible for the rejuvenation of French music at the end of the nineteenth century. No doubt this is partly due to the campaign waged in his favour by Nietzsche when, having renounced his admiration for Wagner, he declared war on his former idol. From then on



Photograph of Richard Wagner, taken in Munich.

he was to proclaim Bizet as the champion of "Mediterranean clarity" as opposed to the mists in which German art was shrouded.

There is no doubt that with Carmen, his masterpiece, produced in the same year as his premature death at the age of 37, Bizet endowed the French lyric theatre with a tragedy exempt, as Nietzsche pnt it, from "grimacing and rhetoric, counterfeit emotions and the falseness inherent in the 'grand' style.' In this work he achieved at one stroke, on the dramatic plane, a degree of concision, vitality and intensity unsurpassed in any work of Italian "verismo", these qualities being combined, in Bizet's case, with a far more refined and musicianly approach. Most of the themes in Carmen are clear-out and firmly shaped, the orchestration is brilliant, though the means employed are simple, and the harmonies sound well, although there is nothing in them to justify the reproach of being "Wagnerian" that was brought against them when the opera was first performed. Subsequently Bizet's work was criticized on different grounds; he is sometimes reproached for his 'opportunism' and occasionally rather facile melody; but can we be sure that without these concessions to the taste of the day Carmen would ever have succeeded in breaking down the resistance of theatre managers, the public and the critics, or that its survival is not due to Micaela's romances, just as Faust, perhaps, owes its popularity to the Soldiers' Chorus and the Jewel Song? One is tempted to believe this when one recalls the tribulations of Eduard Lalo (1823-1892),

Letter from Richard Wagner to his publisher Flaxland. Munich, Jan. 1, 1865.

another great composer, unjustly underestimated, especially by non-French musicologists. Although his masterpiece, Le Roi d'Ys, completed in 1876, a year after Carmen, had to wait twelve years before being produced, it is at least quite as rich musically, as full of vigour and no less brilliantly orchestrated; while the ballet Namouna, disparaged when it was first produced, having now been revived and provided with a new scenario, is triumphing today under the title of Suite en Blanc.

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921), whom we shall be mentioning again, wrote a good deal for the theatre, notably a charming opéra-comique, Phryné, and two operas, Henry VIII and Samson et Dalila, the latter having first been conceived as an oratorio, and then rewritten and produced on the stage at Weimar in 1877, thanks to the intervention of Liszt. In 1890 it entered the repertory of the Paris Opéra where it still occupies an important place. No doubt its form, similar to that of the Meyerbeerian 'Grand Opera', seems oldfashioned today. But thanks to the quality of the music, well written and well orchestrated, and of a more emotional character than is usual with Saint-Saëns, Samson et Dalila is an essential landmark in the history of French opera.

To the same period belong the operatic works of Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-1894). For a long time his truculence and humour and the brilliance of his orchestration more or less concealed the profound originality of the musical language he forged for himself. Today we can see the extent to which he influenced a number of musicians of the generation that succeeded him—Ravel, Dukas, Albeniz, Florent Schmitt. A fervent admirer of Wagner, he tried, towards the end of his career in Gwendoline

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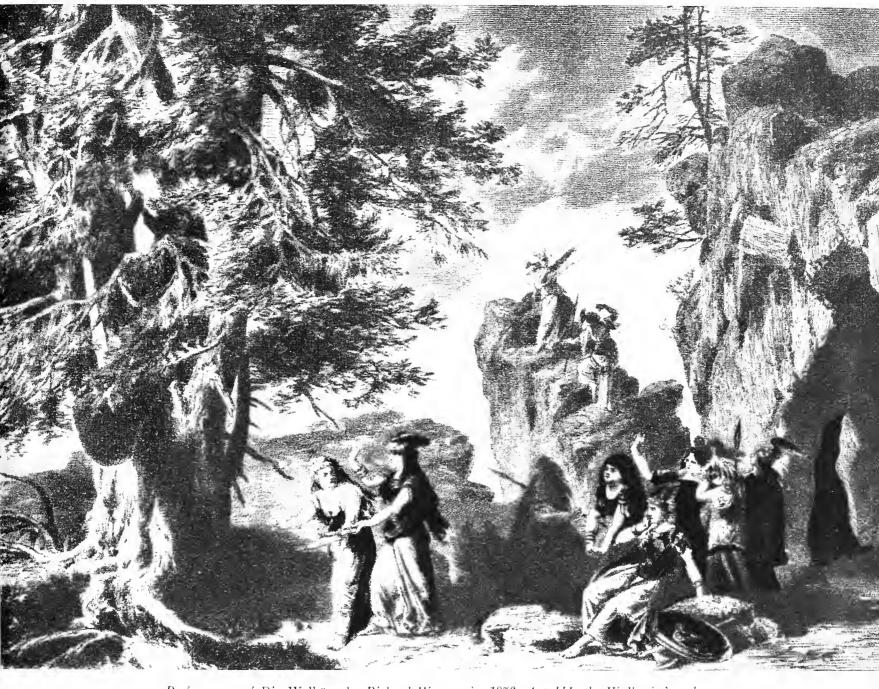
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Performance of Die Walkure by Richard Wagner in 1876. Act III, the Walkyries' rock.

and Briséis to effect a compromise between French opera and Wagnerian music-drama. These two operas, at which he worked with enthusiasm, are inferior both to his opéras-bouffe L'Etoile, Une Education manquée and Le Roi malgré lui, in which he could give free rein to his exuberant fantasy and to his piano music.

A year junior to Chabrier, Jules Massenet (1842-1912) enjoyed in his lifetime a far greater vogue, which seems today to have declined very considerably. Only some five or six of his thirty operas, all of which had at one time been brilliantly successful, have survived. But of these three, at least, Manon, Werther and Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame will keep his name alive for a long time to come. In them can be seen at their best those qualities of sensual charm, pathos and tenderness which Massenet elsewhere

tended to cheapen, through excessive complaisance towards the least refined sections of his public. But as regards sureness of touch, elegance of style and masterly orchestration, even his minor works can still serve as excellent examples.

Limitations of space exclude the possibility of making, even in the form of a résumé, a detailed survey of the operatic production at the close of the last century. There is no doubt, however, that there is real originality in Salammbô and Sigurd (1872) by Reyer (1823-1909) although the latter work has suffered from the fact that its subject bears a quite superficial resemblance to a Wagnerian theme. There is no less originality in the vigorous dramas which Alfred Bruneau (1857-1934) constructed on librettos in prose in which Zola sought to achieve a kind of lyricism expressing

the soul of the people (Le Rève, L'Attaque du moulin, L'Ouragan, Messidor). This naturalistic tendency found its fullest expression in the Louise (1900) of Gustave Charpentier (1860-1956). Anthor of both text and music he succeeded, in spite of the prosaic nature of the libretto and the subject, in creating moments of intense lyricism and occasionally pathos. A discreet use of the Leitmotif, an abundance of melody, symphonic interludes in which the writing has a clarity which betrays a pupil of Massenet, and a feeling for descriptive music which is one of the oldest French traditions, have ensured for this work a world-wide triumph, which was not repeated in the case of Charpentier's second "musical novel" Julien.

Léo Delibes (1836-1891) deserves special mention for the way in which his music combines an apparent facility







Left, photograph of Tchaikovsky. Centre and right, details of the portraits of Mussorgsky and Glinka by I. Repin.

which makes it accessible to every class of listener, with an accomplished and faultless technique. Although his operettas are rarely heard, his opéras-comique (Le Roi l'a dit and Lakmé (1883)) and his ballets Coppélia and Sylvia are still very popular in France.

### Offenbach and operetta

Side by side with the larger operatic forms, the nineteenth century in France saw the rise of another, and perhaps inferior kind of entertainment in which a great deal of talent was displayed—namely, the operetta. Attempts have been made to connect operetta with the old opera-buffa, but it is probable that the only point of resemblance between them is that in many cases librettist and composers were on a par.

Just as Goldoni had provided contemporary Italian composers with excellent librettos, Meilhac and Halévy wrote for Offenbach extremely amusing lyrics which we still find irresistibly droll today.

It was Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880) whose operettas had the most resounding success-Orphée aux enfers (1858), La belle Hélène, La vie Parisienne, etc. This German musician, who came to Paris when he was very young, had no rival when it came to understanding and reflecting the tastes of a society which was vastly amused by parody and satire, even when directed against itself. He has a gift for caricature equal to that of Daumier or Gavarni and an inexhaustible vivacity exhibited in more than a hundred works. His only serious composition, Les Contes d'Hoffmann, completed in the year he died, shows that he would have been capable of higher things if he had turned his steps in that direction carlier.

Offenbach was not the creator of the operetta, as has sometimes been claimed. He had been preceded in that field by a musician who had more than once proved himself to be his equal in drollery and brio—Florimond Ronger, better known as Hervé, whose earliest operettas had been produced prior to 1850. The best known of these, L'Œil crevé (1867), Le petit Faust, and Mam'zelle Nitouche were contemporary with Offenbach's most successful operettas.

Hervé had begun by combining the profession of composer with that of organist, as had been done also by André Messager (1853-1929), a musician of exceptional worth and an undisputed master in the field of operetta which he endowed with an aristocratic tone that none of his predecessors had ever achieved. La Basoche, Les P'tites Michu, Véronique are not musically inferior to Fortunio, one of the best opéras-comiques in the repertory.

But the operetta did not remain for long the monopoly of Paris. Very soon Vienna entered the lists with Franz von Suppé (1819-1895), the composer of Poet and Peasant and other operettas, vaudevilles and ballets, and Johann Strauss the younger, the "Waltz King" whose Fledermaus has all the vivacity of Offenbach. After these came Franz Lehar, Emmerich Kalmann, Oscar Strauss, Leo Fall, etc., in whose hands operettas became less farcical, more sentimental and insipid.

In England a higher level of musicality was reached in the works of Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900), whom some critics consider the best British composer for the Theatre since Purcell. His greatest successes were Princess Ida, The Pirates of Penzance, H. M. S. Pinafore and The Mikado. In the United States the most important names in this field were Victor Herbert (1859-1924) and Reginald de Koven, who were followed by numerous writers of operettas and musical comedies

of whom the most popular were Rudolf Friml (Rose-Marie), Vincent Youmans (No, No, Nanette), George Gershwin (Tip-Toes), Jerome Kern and Irving Berlin.

### Giuseppe Verdi

In Italy, where numerous second-rate musicians were content to write, with infinitely less talent and skill, operas à la Donizetti, there arose a composer who, after a relatively short experimental period, was to prove the most powerful operatic genius his country had ever known since Monteverdi. Giuseppe Verdi was born at Roncole, near Parma, in 1813 in the same year as Wagner whom he outlived by 18 years (he died at Milan in 1901). After studying with a succession of more or less obscure teachers (he failed to enter the Milan Conservatory) his first opera was produced in 1839 at La Scala. This was Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio, and was a success. A second opera the following year was a failure, but with the third, Nabucco (1842) Verdi's name was made. It contains already those lively, impassioned choruses whose transparent allusions to political events of the day linked them directly with the nationalist movement glorified by Manzoni and the young Italian Romantics.

Verdi's great creative period began with Rigoletto (1851), followed by Il Trovatore and La Traviata (1853)—three works conceived in the style of French 'Grand Opera', but enlivened by the skill with which the melody is adapted to the drama, the sincerity of the music and, from a technical point of view, the logical arrangement of key-sequences, all of

Eugène Manet: The Music Lesson, > 1870. Rouart Collection, Paris.

which were much superior to anything to be found in Meyerbeer. Their only weakness—a weakness which Verdi corrected gradually and overeame triumphantly at the end of his career-lay in the poverty of the orchestral parts. Accustomed to entrust all the expressive content to the voices, Verdi was for a long time quite content to accompany them in a manner hardly less elementary than Donizetti. He had made some progress in this respect with Un ballo in maschera (1859) and La Forza del destino (1862); but it was not until after Don Carlos (1867) that his desire to modernise his harmonic system and enrich his orchestra became evident. Progress was still more marked in Aida (1871) where the grandiose setting, which could not

be more pompously traditional as regards externals, goes hand in hand with the most moving and dramatic action which is vastly superior to the tawdry, pseudo-historical libretto.

After a lapse of some years, during which Verdi produced nothing except the Requiem, composed for the anniversary of the death of Manzoni (although the Mass had actually been begun some years earlier), in 1887 came the work in which his genius found its fullest expression—Othello. At the age of 73 the composer rose to such heights of imagination, vigour and technical mastery that his opera is in no way inferior to the Shakespearian drama on which it is based. It is often alleged that it shows the influence of Wagner. There is no

doubt that Verdi was far better acquainted with Wagner's works than had generally been believed. But he had never tried to imitate him; nor did he ever seek to make the orchestra more important than, or even as important as, the voices, or to sacrifice the clarity of the traditional melodic forms in favour of melodic continuity, or to allow the tonality of his operas to be obscured by excessive chromaticism. He continued in the path he had traced for himself since Don Carlos, and in his last work. Falstaff, written in 1892 when he was almost eighty years old, he goes even further in giving prominence to the orchestra, although it is still entirely subordinated to the inllexions of the voice. This operabouffe which is irresistibly comic, in spite



of its underlying note of philosophical disillusionment, is from a purely musical point of view a treasure that has no equal in nineteenth-century Italian opera and constitutes, together with Othello, the finest tribute Shakespeare ever received from any musician. It was a poet, who was himself a composer of merit, Arrigo Boito, who had written for Verdi the libretti of Othello and Falstaff. The only one of Boito's operas that was successful was his Mefistofele (1868) based on the first two parts of Goethe's Faust. After a difficult start, this work soon became popular, and it is now long since it had its 5000th performance.

### Puccini and Verismo

With the advent of the 'naturalistic' school of musicians in Italy, the apostles of "verismo", there was a marked deterioration in musical standards in the theatre. The movement started (as the result of a competition arranged by the publisher Sanzogno) with the sudden revelation of an opera which embodied all the characteristics, good and bad, of the new style in their most extreme form: this was Cavalleria Rusticana (1890) by Pietro Mascagni. Here, as in Pagliacci (1892) by Leoncavallo, we are in the presence of a dramatic conception directly opposed to that of Wagner. These works are based, not on heroic legends, but on everyday life, and the characters are as ordinary and commonplace as those to be found in the operas of Alfred Bruneau or Gustave Charpentier. The action is rapid and brutal; in the majority of "verist" operas the dénouement takes the form of a murder. There is no symphonic development, and the only opportunities for contemplation or reflection are afforded by the set arias,

often very effective, in the old-fashioned tradition. The orchestration varies between vigorous declamation on the brass and percussion and sugary passages on the muted strings, with the 'cellos doubling the voices. The object of all this is to play upon the emotions of audiences



Johannes Brahms in 1853. Pencil. Carpentras Museum.

similar to those which are attracted by mclodrama in the theatre. There is more serious musical merit in the operas of Francesco Cilea, Umberto Giordano (André Chénier, 1896, and Fedora, 1898) and Franco Alfano (Resurrection, 1904).

If the works of Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) bear a certain resemblance to those of the "verismo" school, it would be unjust to place them on the same level. For his is the case of a very great musician who, like Massenet, wishes to give pleasure and knowingly makes such concessions as he considers opportune. But his melodic invention is infinitely more varied and more seduc-

tive than that of Mascagni and Leoncavallo, while his harmony and orchestration present many original features which have been admired by such discerning judges as Schoenberg and Ravel. If Puccini has been misjudged in some circles, this is largely due to the 'realistic' nature of the libretto of his first success La Bohème (1896), in which the heroine dies of consumption in an artist's studio. But he has depicted other milieux and other periods of history in La Tosca and Madame Butterfly; in the triptych Il Tabarro, Suor Angelica and Gianni Schicchi, the last of which reveals a rare sense of humour; and finally in Turandot, a work whose bold harmonies, exotic atmosphere and rich colouring combine to make it Puccini's masterpiece.

# The German symphonists: Bruckner, Brahms, Mahler, Reger

However important developments in the lyric theatre during the second half of the nineteenth century may have been, this does not mean that other forms of music were neglected, for a feature of this period was a vigorous revival of all forms of instrumental music, notably the symphony.

In the Germanic countries, after an ungrateful period which produced nothing but pale copies of Mendelssohn, Schumann and Liszt, two outstanding personalities made their appearance almost simultaneously: in Austria Bruckner, and in Germany Brahms.

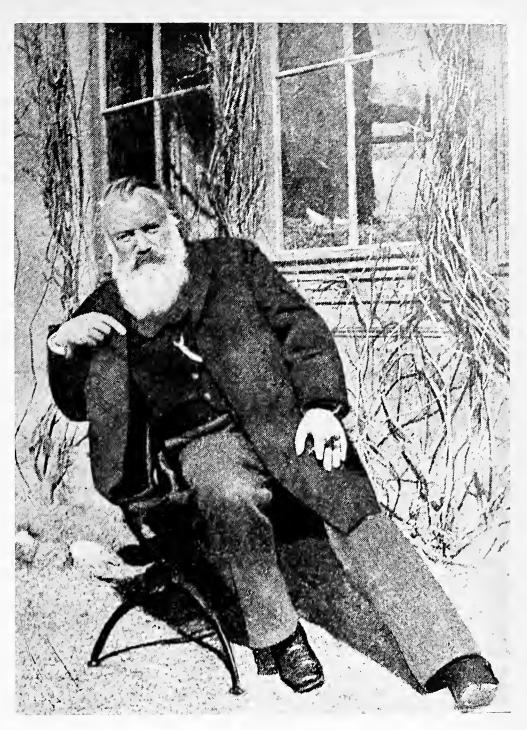
Anton Bruckner (1824-1896) who, like Schubert, was the son of a schoolmastermusician, combined the two professions until after reaching the age of thirty he



was able to support himself thanks to his talent as an organist. By this time he had already composed some fifty organ and vocal works which reveal his great gifts, in spite of certain gaucheries due to his being largely self-taught. He then began to study the technique of composition seriously. Two symphonies (1863 and 1864) show what progress he had made, but he considered them merely as a preparation and did not include them in his cycle of nine symphonies (1866-1894) to which he gave opus numbers. These symphonies are of monumental size, while their melodic spontaneity and abundance of ideas seem to stem from Schubert, Bruckner's main source of inspiration, together with Bach, Beethoven and Wagner (for Bruckner, though having absolutely no aptitude for the theatre, not only admired Wagner, but adopted or instinctively hit upon several specifically Wagnerian technical devices). His orchestration is sumptuous, the style genuinely symphonic. Its undoubted prolixity has long prevented this music from hecoming widely known, but its sincerity and beauty of sound are gradually winning for it the recognition it deserves.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) has little in common with Bruckner, except for a kind of apprehension which prevented him for a long time, if not from writing symphonies, at least from allowing them to be performed. The son of a Hamburg double-hass player, he began at an early age to earn his living as a pianist and teacher of music. He was hardly twenty years old when Schumann, in his journal Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, pronounced him to be the young genius who was destined to breathe new life into the music of his country. For a few more years Brahms divided his time between concert tours and composition before devoting himself almost exclusively to the latter from 1863 onwards, when he settled in Vienna. With the exception of opera and oratorio, Brahms wrote almost every kind of music, but his reputation rests mainly on the four symphonies (1876, 1877, 1883 and 1885), the two Piano Concertos, the Violin Concerto, the Double Concerto for violin, 'cello and orchestra, and the German Requiem. In all these he showed himself to be a master of form and a great technician who derived inspiration, not only from Beethoven, who was his god, but from the old polyphonist masters as well. It was not his ambition to pose as a revolutionary, but to restore to the old classical forms, which had been corrupted by the excesses of the Romantic school, their former nobility and amplitude. This did not, however, imply that

■ J. Brahms: Autograph manuscript of the F minor Sonata, op. 5. Beginning of the 2d movement. Private Collection.



Photograph of Johannes Brahms at the end of his life.

he was without imagination; for proof to the contrary one has only to consider his rhythmic discoveries and his revival of the variation form on a large scale. But his profound personality finds its fullest expression in his chamber music, lieder, a cappella choruses and smaller piano pieces, which reveal a tender and poetic vein and an intimate charm which will surprise those who still think of Brahms as being heavy and pedantic -a notion which has for long been encouraged not only by his avowed adversaries, but also by his interpreters who by their misplaced zeal have tended to present him in an unduly solemn light.

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) has more in common with Bruckner—at any rate as regards the vast dimensions of his orchestral works—nine symphonies and a tenth left unfinished—which almost call for very large forces.

A conductor of great distinction, who has served as a model for Bruno Walter, Mengelberg and Klemperer, it would seem that Mahler always wished to try out and exploit all the possibilities of the orchestral resources he had at his disposal. In his 8th Symphony, known as the "Symphony of the Thousand" there is even a mandoline whose frail sound can be heard in the midst of an ensemble comprising, in addition to a reinforced string section, 47 woodwind and brass, an organ, a piano and percussion in proportion, plus eight soloists and three choirs. His inspiration is unequal. Sometimes lofty, sometimes trivial, it reflects the disorder of a



post-romantic attitude reacting, through sarcasm and parody, against the effusions of its own sentimentality. Its excessive emotionalism finds its counterpart in Schoenberg and his disciples, who are considered by some critics to be in the direct line of descendance from Wagner, marks the end of an epoch which, it would seem, has had its day. The name of Max Reger will above all be associated with the reaction in favour of "pure music", as defined by Eduard Hanslick: "a form of sound in movement" which has no need to express

family (having no connection with the Viennese Strauss "Waltz King" Richard Strauss received as a child a complete musical education, studying the piano, the violin, harmony and composition. At the age of fifteen he had already composed a string quartet and other



Fantin Latour: Round the Piano. 1855. Paris, Louvre. Emmanuel Chabrier at the piano and Vincent d'Indy standing on the right, cigarette in hand, with a group of friends.

Mahler. They certainly owe much to him in the matter of orchestration, thematic development and harmonic emancipation.

The influence of Max Reger (1873-1916) has been of far shorter duration. The disproportion between his musical invention, which is limited, and the science he displays in supplementing it is too great; and this brand of neoclassicism based on counterpoint, weakened by a chromaticism inherited from

◆ P. A. Renoir: Little girls at the piano. 1892. Oil. Lehmann Collection, New York. anything and must not be subordinated to any element outside itself, such as poetry, description etc.

### Richard Strauss

At the opposite pole to this austerity is the art of Richard Strauss whose main characteristics are an extraordinary vitality, an eclecticism free from any prejudices and a virtuosity indulged in for its own sake.

Born at Munich in 1864 of a musical

chamber music, and he made his début as a conductor when he was twenty (Hans von Bülow called him "a born conductor").

His early works show the influence of Mendelssohn and Brahms; but his anti-Wagnerian bias, which was encouraged by his father, was soon superseded by a wholehearted admiration for the composer of Tristan, as well as for Liszt, whose example he was to follow by cultivating for nearly twenty years the form of the symphonic poem. But he went to far greater lengths in the matter of descriptive detail than Liszt had ever done, Don Juan (1888), Death and Trans-



figuration, Till Eulenspiegel, Heldenleben and the Domestic Symphony, to mention only those most frequently performed today, are really 'program music', and cannot be properly understood unless the hearer knows beforehand what they are 'about'.

obeying no other guide than the impulse of the moment. Like Mahler, although to a lesser degree, he will lavish the most elaborate treatment on indifferent themes. This is also true of his symphonic production where, however, after the Alpensinfonie (1915) he began to

vated it along with other musical forms, such as Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt, Peter Cornelius, Brahms and Strauss, there were some composers who devoted themselves so consistently to songwriting that it is on this that their reputation mainly rests. A case in point



César Franck: Grand Trio, composed by Franck at the age of eleven. 1833. Paris, Conservatoire Library. Autograph MS.

At the beginning of the present century Strauss turned his attention almost exclusively to the theatre. Salomé in 1905 and Elektra in 1908 created a scandal in conservative circles, and even among Wagnerians, who thought they had been betrayed; but they aroused the enthusiasm of an ever increasing section of the public who were won over by the dynamism and evocative power, the sense of tragedy and opulent orchestration exhibited in these scores. They were followed by eleven more operatic works, of which the most famous are Rosenkavalier (1910), Ariadne auf Naxos, Die Frau ohne Schatten, Intermezzo, Arabella and Capriccio (1941). It would be a great mistake to look for any methodical evolution in his output. Strauss can be jocular and severe by turns; his harmony can be bold and dazzling at one moment, only to be succeeded at the next by the facile seduction of the Viennese waltz; and he will exchange the vast orchestra of Salome (105 players) for the modest 36 instrumentalists in Ariadne auf Naxos,

■ Edgar Degas: Musicians in the orchestra.
Oil painting. Paris, Jeu de Paume.

show greater discrimination and an ever increasing preference for smaller orchestras, as in the Couperin Suite, the Divertimento, and Metamorphosen (1945) written for 23 solo stringed instruments. In this work, which might almost be considered as his musical testament (he died in 1949) he renounced the magical effects he used to extract from the multiplicity of orchestral timbres, and this enables one to appreciate all the better, in this monochrome texture, the virtuosity of his polyphonic writing and the way in which it is used to enhance an authentic and profound musical expression. It only remains to add that Richard Strauss has written works of every description with the exception of sacred music, notably 150 songs which, occupy a place of honour in the modern repertory of *Lieder*.

### Post-Schubertian Lied

The *Lied*, since Schubert, had never ceased to be in favour with the German masters. Apart from those who culti-

is Karl Loewe (1796-1869), author of several operas and sixteen oratorios, but who is remembered chiefly for his 368 songs, for the most part in the form of 'ballads'. Within this form, in which up until then two main types could be distinguished, one strophic, and consequently liable to be monotonous, and the other in the form of a continuous melody, he combined the two styles, thus obtaining a much more flexible framework more closely wedded to the text. His melodies are agreeable, and the accompaniments ingenious without being over-elaborate.

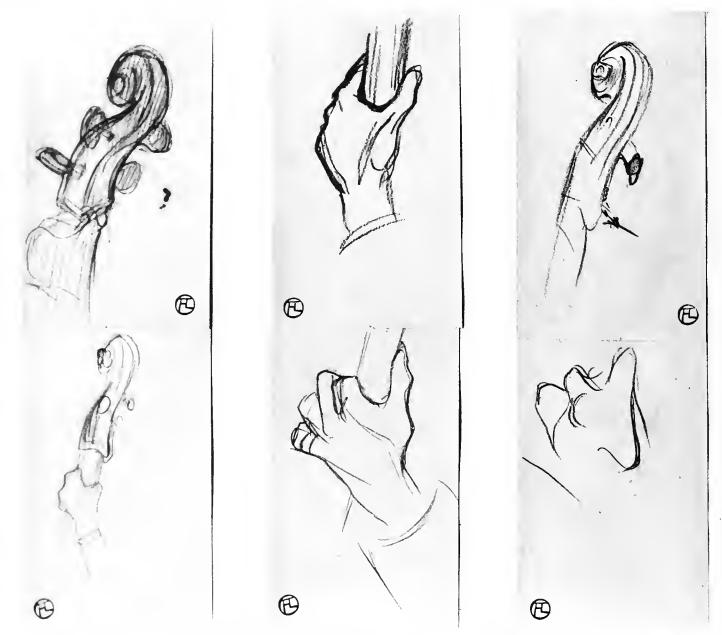
Robert Franz (1815-1892), apart from his 257 Lieder, only wrote a few choral and religious works. His Lieder, remarkable for their purity of form and the result of a thorough study of the works of Bach and Handel, are inspired by an ideal which is at least as much moral as it is artistic, for it was his wish that they should exercise a pacifying influence and "bear a message of peace and fraternity". They are all written for the same mezzosoprano register, and it is keeping with the composer's general attitude that the

accompaniments should not be unduly prominent at the expense of the sense of the words.

Hugo Wolf (1860-1903) had more ambitious aims which he was able to achieve. His œuvre consists almost entirely of Lieder, apart from which he left only a

# Revival of symphonic music in France

In France in the nineteenth century there were not many signs of a musical renaissance, apart from the lyric theatre, afterwards, the leading French symphonist. He was astonishingly precocious (at the age of six he was already composing little pieces technically correct; at eleven he gave a concert at which he played piano concertos by Mozart and Beethoven, as well as pieces by Handel and Bach)



Toulouse-Lautrec: Six sketches of hands on a violin (studies for a portrait). Pencil drawing, 1900. Albi Museum.

very lively opera-comique, The Corregidor (whose only fault is its rather heavy, Wagnerian orchestration), an unfinished opera, a few choral works and about thirty instrumental pieces, of which a third are merely sketches. With the exception of his early songs, all his Lieder are organized in five big cycles.

The style and treatment are extremely varied, and inspired by Wagnerian drama, so that the sense of the words is always respected and enhanced, not only by precise accentuation, but by the almost symphonic richness of the piano accompaniment whose role it is to express what cannot be conveyed in words. Hugo Wolf is the outstanding master of nineteenth-century Lied.

round about the years 1850-1860, but the movement grew rapidly and soon found favour with the public. One reason for this was the increasing interest shown by French composers in non-operatic music; but there were two events which particularly stimulated French musical circles. One was the foundation of the Concerts Populaires organized by Jules Pasdeloup in 1861 in the vast premises of a winter circus. Another was the creation in 1871 of a society to defend and disseminate French music, which included Saint-Saëns, Fauré, César Franck, Bizet, d'Indy, Dupare and Chausson.

A leading spirit of the Société Nationale de Musique had been Camille Saint-Saëns 1835-1921, then, and for a long time and by this time (1871) was the author of four symphonies, the first dating from 1853 (two remained unpublished), a quintet (1855), the *Trio in F.*, the first three piano concertos, the *Rondo Capriccioso* and a concerto for violin and orchestra, as well as a *Christmas Oratorio*, a Mass, motets and songs.

Between 1871 and 1900 he wrote four symphonic poems, two of which, Le Rouet d'Omphale and La Danse Macabre, are now classies, the Septet, the Symphony with organ, the Fifth Piano Concerto, Samson and Dalila and live or six of his best operatic scores. After 1900 he wrote another four operas (Déjanire is the least neglected), a lot of incidental music, choruses and songs; while during

the last years of his life (1919-1921) he composed a string quartet, fugues for piano, and sonatas for oboe, clarinet, bassoon and piano. But in his latest works he appears as a reactionary, after having been first at the head, and later at the centre of the musical movement of his time. He is at the moment out of favour, having paid the penalty for being too long successful. He is also paying for the academicism of which he made himself the representative. And vet it is highly probable that certain of his works will survive, notably such constructional masterpieces as the Symphony with organ and the concertos and solo pieces in which the resources of the instrument are exploited with a skill which will ensure their popularity with virtuosi for a long time to come. Like Richard Strauss, he is often content to use thematic material of a rather vulgar nature which, again like Strauss, he handles with such skill as to compel our admiration; but, unlike Strauss, he deserves to be studied for the clarity of his style, the harmony of his form and the transparency of his orchestra.

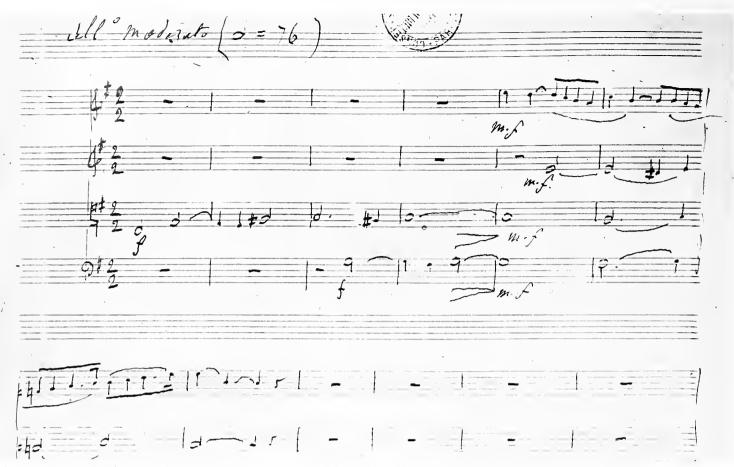
In his life, as in his music, César Franck had little in common with Saint-Saëns. He worked hard to achieve fame which came late in his career; his production was less varied and more austere (he wrote hardly anything for the theatre); he founded a school, without ever having aspired to do so, and after his death was held in ever growing esteem.

Born in Liége in 1822, he was brought at the age of 13 to Paris (where he died in 1890) to complete his musical education which had begun in his native town. An ambitious and authoritarian father, with a naive taste for publicity, made him embark upon the career of a virtuoso pianist which, however, he abandoned as soon as he was able to escape from his tyrannical parent. From then on he was to devote his life to teaching, and in this way he supported himself to the end of his life, supplementing his earnings with the meagre salary he received as organist and choirmaster.

He started to compose at a very early age; at eleven he had already written a Grand Rondo for piano and a Trio for piano and strings, and these were soon followed by Fantasias and Variations etc., which he played at his concerts. But there was nothing in all this that pointed to anything but a precocious facility of assimilation. But the Trios of 1841 (especially the first which is still sometimes performed) revealed a temperament which was to assert itself unmistakably in the organ pieces of 1860-62. But it was when César Franck was appointed organ professor at the Conservatoire in Paris in 1872 that his great

Van Gogh: Mademoiselle Gachet at the piano. 1890. Basle, Kunstmuseum.





Gabriel Fauré: Beginning of the string quartet, opus 121. 1924. Autograph manuscript Nr. 417. Conservatoire Library, Paris.

creative period began, during which he produced in close succession the oratorios Redemption and Les Béatitudes; Psalm 150; the symphonic poems Les Eolides, Psyché, Le Chasseur Maudit; the Symphony, the Quintet, the Quartet, the Violin and Piano Sonata (one example of each of these forms of which the classical and romantic composers wrote several); the Djinns and the Variations symphoniques for piano and orchestra, and the great piano and organ works. I will only mention for the record two operas, Hulda and Ghisèle; it is not surprising that one who had consistently attacked the predominance in France of the lyric theatre should have been ill at ease in that particular field.

César Franck's music shows strong German influences, and owes much to the polyphony of Bach and to Beethoven's development of Variation form; these influences left their mark on a personality distinguished by a fervent idealism, and a fertile musical imagination (which made him a marvellous improviser) and a technique in which chromaticism and modulation perhaps play too prominent a part, though they are certainly highly characteristic. Not unlike that of Bruckner, Franck's music afters to some extent from the "divines long tears" with which Schubert used to be represented, as well as from a latent conflict between a forward-looking imisical language and a temperamental instinct to safeguard the classical inheritance. We shall have occasion to

mention later on a certain number of Franck's disciples. Among his contemporaries and supporters in the struggle to restore to non-operatic music its former dignity and prestige were two musicians whom we have already noticed



Eugène Manet : Portrait of Emmanuel Chabrier.

as being actively engaged in renovating the lyric theatre -Lalo and Chabrier. Apart from his operas, Lalo's best known compositions are the *Rapsodie* 

Norvégienne (a symphonic transcription

of the Fantaisie Norvégienne for violin and orchestra), the Violoncello Concerto, and three Violin Concertos one of which, the Symphonie Espagnole, is still very popular with violinists. His Symphony and chamber music are less often heard. They nevertheless possess the same qualities—original thematic material, rhythmic variety and sound structure, while the orchestral writing is distinguished by its variety and brilliance which are obtained with a remarkable economy of means.

Chabrier, on the other hand, being a less accomplished technician, employs in his symphonic works a richer and more abundant palette from which, however, he produces a quantity of new and highly original effects. Yet he wrote little for orchestra alone besides Joyeuse Marche and España, and transcriptions of piano pieces such as Bourrée Fantasque and the Suite Pastorale (based on four of the Pièces pittoresques). It was the astonishing success of España (1883), a rhapsody based on themes, some of which are authentically Spanish while others are of Chabrier's invention, that first brought him to the notice of the general public. Nothing could be more characteristic than this work of his fantasy, harmonic invention, humour and evocative power-all the qualities, in fact, which are to be found in his piano pieces. Chabrier was also one of those who

Mary Cassatt: The Banja Lesson, Pas- ► tel, Circa 1894, Private Collection, USA.



helped to enrich the repertory of modern French song, along with Gounod who had initiated the new movement after half a century of insipid romances. He introduced a humoristic note, all the more precious for being almost his exclusive contribution. Other songwriters have tried to be humorous, but not one possesses such spontaneity (of the kind found sometimes in operettas), and very few have been able to obtain, as Chabrier does, comic effects which are the result of purely musical devices, independent of the text.

Without claiming to retrace here, even in résumé, the history of French song, I cannot ignore the contribution of Ernest Chausson and Henri Duparc. A pupil and friend of Franck's, greatly impressed by Wagner and the author of

an opera (Le Roi Arthus), Chausson left, among other things, a Symphony, a syphonic poem and a piano quartet. His Poème for violin and orchestra, and the Concert for violin string quartet and piano, are often played and are widely known through recordings. His inspiration found its fullest expression, however, in his songs (numbering about thirty) which are distinguished by their tender, sometimes pathetic and almost always nostalgic feeling, and by the sobriety of their style; it is noticeable that the balance between words and music is always perfectly maintained. Yet they do not possess the amplitude and variety of range found in those which have established the fame of Henri Duparc (1848-1933). The strange and distressing destiny of this musician

is well known; it will be recalled that, before he attained his fortieth year, he was stricken by a nervous disease which, although leaving his intellect unimpaired, destroyed in him all his musical faculties. He had written nothing but a symphonic poem Lénore, a little Nocturne for orchestra, a few piano pieces (leaving out of account a certain number of youthful works which he had destroyed)—and the sixteen admirable songs, all written between 1868 and 1884. By their depth of feeling, sincerity of accent and the symphonic richness of their accompaniments, songs like La Chanson triste, Phydilé, L'Invitation au voyage, Le Manoir de Rosemonde and La Vie antérieure have enriched French music with the equivalent of the masterpieces of the German romantic Lied.

# The contemporary period



Claude Debussy photographed in 1909.

### A new universe opens: Debussy

With Debussy a new stage in the evolution of music, and not only of French music, was ushered in. It would be no exaggeration to say that his influence since the dawn of the present century has been no less decisive than that exercised in the past by a Monteverdi or a Wagner.

Claude-Achille Debussy was born at Saint-Germain-en-Laye on August 22, 1862. There was no musician in his family and no artistic atavism to account for the gifts which he displayed unmistakably and at a very early age. He was only ten when he entered the Paris Conservatoire, where he had amongst other teachers, César Franck (whose

organ classes he very soon deserted) and, for composition, Ernest Guiraud who understood him better than all the rest. His pupil was not one of those who readily conform to scholastic discipline. Of a rebellious disposition, and resolutely hostile to all academic formulae, he could only make progress under a teacher indulgent enough, and above all possessed of sufficient intuition to divine the fundamental originality that lay beneath his superficial extravagances. It was thanks to this flexible teaching that Debussy succeeded in carrying off the Prix de Rome, though his cantata, L'Enfant prodige, showed signs of the influence of Massenet, then in charge of another composition class, to which, however, Debussy preferred that presided over by Guiraud.

It was about this time—as we know from unimpeachable sources—that he began to invent for his own use a revolutionary harmonic system (which he was prudent enough not to introduce into his cantata) while propounding to his teacher his conception of what lyric drama should be, already foreshadowing the aesthetic of Pelléas et Mélisande. This alone would seem to discredit the notion favoured by some historians that it was Erik Satie (q.v.) who was the forerunner and inspirer of Debussy as a harmonist and composer for the theatre. Not that he was altogether free from influences of any kind. While still a pupil at the Conservatoire, he was fortunate enough to be engaged by a member of the Russian aristocracy, Mme von Meck (Tchaikovsky's Egeria) to assist her in the reading and performance of new music. As a result, he accompanied her on various journeys to Italy, Austria and Russia, and in this way he was able to meet Wagner in Venice and Boito in Milan; to hear in Moscow, not only the gypsies, but the new Russian music (but not Boris Godounov which he did not become acquainted with until 1889), and to see in Vienna Tristan and Isolde. Soon afterwards, in the house of his friends the Vasniers, he mixed with painters and poets and set out to acquire a literary and artistic culture which he was able to add to during his stay in Rome. It was not long before he made the acquaintance of Mallarmé; and in 1888 and 1889 he visited Bayreuth which made a deep impression on him, although this was soon supplanted by another and stronger one induced, this time, by the music and drama of the Far East which held him spell-bound at the Universal Exhibition of 1889. Under the influence of these emotional impressions the tendencies which had alarmed his teachers at the Conservatoire, far from weakening; became more and more pronounced.

Working along the same lines as Mallarmé, but without any fixed doctrine, and guided solely by his instinct, he set out to free himself from everything in the academic curriculum that seemed to him to he mere empty formalism. He envisaged the gradual emancipation of melody from the tyranny of square-cut phrases and rigid rhythms; the repudiation of set forms and pre-conceived developments; the freeing of harmony from a mass of restrictions, many of which could only be explained as anachronistic survivals; and a no less emancipated method of orchestration which would allow for a succession of rich and powerful chordal sequences as well as for delicate 'impressionist' effects, in the best sense of the word, which by no means excludes the idea of construction.

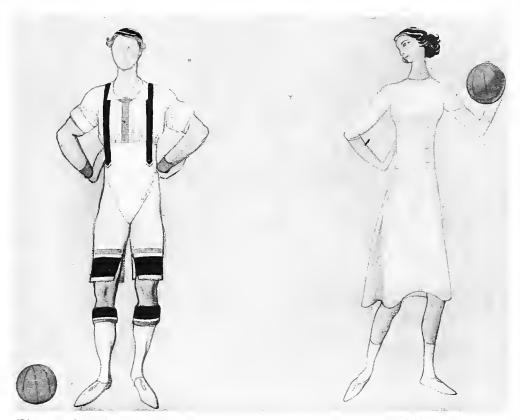
There can be no question here of attempting to show how a positive aesthetic, conscious of its aims and means, emerged from what had originally been, above all, an anti-conformist revolt. What should be remembered is the continuity of an evolution which developed with such coherence and intensity as to become in effect a revolution. It attained its climax with the first performance in 1902 of Pelléas et Mélisande. Although the influence of Wagner is not absent, this work represents the most vigorous reaction that had yet been made against the Wagnerian system, against its gigantism, its overwhelming orchestra, its universe of Gods and heroes hemmed in by shields and legends.

The dramatic conception of *Pelléas*, the declamation, the harmony, the orchestration sounded a sufficiently new note to explain the dismay of the public in 1902, and the enthusiasm of the handful of fervent admirers who finally overcame the massive opposition.

Debussy was well aware that what he had succeeded in doing was something quite out of the ordinary, and never attempted to follow it up with a sequel; it would seem, indeed, that judging from the failure of every attempt to imitate it, Pelléas must be the perfect example of the masterpiece that cannot be copied or repeated. He returned, with La Mer (1905) and Images (1909), to the orchestra-the medium in which already the Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune (1892) and the Nocturnes (1898) had revealed a sensibility and a poetic gift no less personal than the technique invented to display them. In Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien (1911) the exuberant sonorities and modernism of his earlier symphonic works gave place to a linear simplicity, evoking here and there the medieval modes, while Jeux, produced the following year, marked a new step forward, both as regards mobility of form and a style of orchestral writing which, in the opinion of present day composers, seems to foreshadow that of Webern.

Debussy's innovations in the field of vocal, piano and chamber music were equally important. Shortly before his death, which occurred after a long and painful illness on March 25, 1918, he had begun a series of six sonatas, of which only three were actually written. The

The influence of Debussy has been, and still is considerable. It would be a mistake to under-estimate this influence by limiting it to the strictest so-called Debussy-ists, of whom André Caplet (1875-1925) is the most typical. Nor is it enough merely to enumerate the musi-



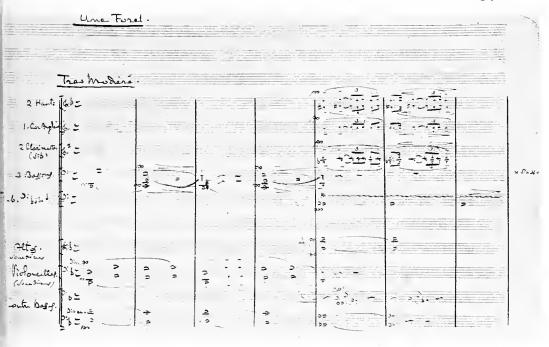
First version of costumes by Léon Bakst for Jeux, a ballet by Nijinsky on a score of Debussy. It was created in 1913 at the Théatre des Champs-Elysées in Paris.

intentional conciseness of the writing and deliberate economy of means cannot, however, conceal their depth of poetic feeling and waywardness, nor prevent us from detecting now and again an agonising undertone of melancholy—a secret which the music seems to be confiding to us, as if unwillingly.

cians of all nationalities who have profited in varying degrees from his technical innovations, such as, for example: Ravel, Albert Roussel, Florent Schmitt, Albeniz, Bartók, Casella, Aaron Copland, Manuel de Falla, Gustav Holst, John Ireland, Kodály, Malipiero, Pizzetti, Vaughan Williams, Villa-Lobos, to cite only a few representative names.

The truth is, his sphere of influence extended far beyond mere 'Debussysme'. Many composers, who were far from sharing his views, are nevertheless indebted to him for the lesson of independence they learned from him; for it was the no less lucid than courageous campaign he carried on against 'accepted ideas', without ever seeking to impose his own, that paved the way for nearly all the innovators who were to follow him. Without his example, Schoenberg, Bartók, Stravinsky would certainly have been great musicians; but it may be doubted whether their genius would have come so quickly, or so fully to fruition.

Claude Debussy: Pelléas and Mélisande. A page of the score from the beginning of the first act. Debussy worked on the opera for ten years; it was given its première at the Paris Opéra on April 30th 1902.



### Vincent d'Indy and the Schola Cantorum

During his life-time it was customary to cite as an opponent of Debussy a musician whose aesthetic creed was charge as its Director, the teaching was as varied and comprehensive as that of the Conservatoire, but conducted in a different spirit; the curriculum was also planned on different lines. Owing to a less exacting entrance examination, the

When in 1904 d'Indy was left in sole





Left, Costume of a Chinese magician by Picasso for Parade, ballet by Cocteau with music by Satie. The first performance, by the Ballets Russes, took place in Paris, May 18th, 1917. Right, Léon Bakst: project for a costume for Firebird. Stravinsky's ballet was first performed at the Paris Opéra on June 25th, 1910.

indeed in sharp contrast to his own: Vincent d'Indy. The situation at the time was somewhat exceptional. Not to mention Fauré, who, as we shall see, was no less important but was attracting less attention, there were three great names before the public in France: Saint-Saëns, formerly a pioneer, represented from now on tradition, and Debussy revolution. D'Indy, whom the conservatives looked upon as revolutionary, was considered by the Debussyists a conservative. And so, by his education, he was. Born in 1851 of an ancient noble family from the French province of Ardèche, his parents intended him for either a legal or military career, while giving him a musical education that for an amateur was exceptionally thorough. In the end music won the day. He was one of the first to join the Société Nationale in 1871; the following year his meeting with César Franck decided his future. It marked the beginning of an unusually varied and active career. Until his death in 1931 he was by turns composer, conductor, musicologist, teacher and, in that capacity, the leading spirit behind the movement launched by the Schola Cantorum. This institution, originally founded in 1894 by Charles Bordes with the collaboration of d'Indy and Guilmant, for the study of sacred music, soon extended its aims.

instrumental classes remained at a somewhat lower level. On the other hand, d'Indy's composition course, spread over a cycle of several years and illustrated with numerous historical concerts, attracted not only novices but seasoned and experienced composers who were seeking a firmer directive. They found one in the rigorously scholastic principles applied to polyphonic writing and formal construction. But the dogmatism of the printed word in the famous Cours de composition was relaxed in practice when pupils showed talent.

As to d'Indy's own music, while certain works in the sphere of symphonic and chamber music seem to be marked by an excessive obedience to the principles inherited from his self-appointed masters, there are many others where the theoretician gives way to the creative artist and genuine lyrical feeling is engendered through the composer's faith, and love of nature and his native soil, enhanced by a passionate devotion to the folk music of the region of the Cevennes. Thus the composer is seen at his best in and is most likely to be remembered by the Poème des Montagnes, the Symphonic sur un chant montagnard français, the Tableaux de voyage and Jour d'été à la montagne.

Erik Satie.

Grouped round Vincent d'Indy and in the same Franckist tradition, there are several composers, apart from Chausson and Duparc, who would repay study did not the dimensions of this work exclude any ambition to make it complete. I will at least mention, among the most important, Guy Ropartz, Sylvio Lazzari, Pierre de Bréville, Alberic Magnard, Charles Tournemire and Guillaume Lekeu who died at the age of 24 after producing some works which d'Indy himself declared revealed "the temperament of a near genius."

### Gabriel Fauré

While the Debussy-d'Indy conflict, fomented by their disciples, whether authorised or not (Debussy had no great love for the Debussystes!), was attracting attention, Gabriel Fauré was carrying on a less ostentatious and systematic campaign, but one that was to prove singularly fruitful.

Born in 1845 at Pamiers, in the region of the Pyrenees, his musical gifts became apparent at an early age and, when he was only nine, attracted the attention of Niedermeyer who was then visiting the region. Niedermeyer had just founded in Paris a school for organists: when Fauré entered it in 1854 his fellowpupils were Eugène Gigout and André Messager, and his teachers Dietsch and Saint-Saëns, with whom he became very friendly. On leaving he became an organist at Rennes, and later came to Paris where, in 1877, he was appointed organist of the Madeleine. In 1896 he succeeded Massenet as Professor of composition at the Conservatoire, of which





Picasso: curtain for Parade, by Cocteau and Satie. This represented Picasso's first work for the Ballets Russes. At the time, both the décors and the music caused a scandal; Satie's score included sirens and typewriters.

he became Director in 1905. Honours and freedom from material cares came to him late in life, and his last years were darkened by the worst calamity that can befall a musician-deafness. He died on November 4th, 1924.

His total output consists of some 50 pieces for the piano, the most important of which are the Thème et Variations, the Ballade and the 13 Nocturnes; 2 Sonatas for piano and violin, 2 for piano and 'cello; one trio; 2 quartets and 2 quintets for piano and strings; and a string quartet. He wrote few large choral and orchestral works, but the Requiem and the lyric drama Pénélope are among the summits of French music. Nevertheless, Fauré is by no means universally admired. Outside France he meets with the same incomprehension that Brahms for a long time encountered in France (though there he is now the object of a veritable cult). Even in France he is still apt to be judged only by his early songs. They have charm and an undeniable elegance, but do not differ greatly from the Gounod model. But in the first violin and piano Sonata, which dates from 1876 (ten years before that of Franck) a real personality emerges which is revealed in the thematic invention, the subtlety of the harmonies and the skill in modulation. The Requiem (1886) is a complete epitomy of all those features of Fauré's style that from now on were to become permanent—sobriety of instrumentation, a transparent texture entirely free from any overloading, and a mastery of harmony and counterpoint whose audacities, far from being emphasized, are so skilfully handled that their novelty passes almost un-noticed. A propos the Requiem, Curt Sachs who praises it highly, finds the style of writing "incredibly conservative"! And yet it contains in embryo, despite an occasional reference to ancient church modes and a few archaic cadences, a new musical language, different from that of Debussy, but equally far removed from Wagnerian and Franckist influences. In the works of his maturity—Pénélope, the 2nd Quintet, l'Horizon chimérique, Fauré's use of enharmonics and luminous arpeggios (he restored life and a new savour to the most stereotyped technical devices) showed what richness the old tonal system still contained. Not the least valuable of Fauré's activities was his work as a teacher; and his teaching could not have been more liberal. Among others who profited from his composition class were: Louis Aubert, Nadia Boulanger, Roger-Ducasse, Enesco, Keechlin, Ladmirault, Ravel and Florent Schmitt. Of all his pupils it was Ravel who was the first to acquire a world-wide reputation.

### Maurice Ravel

Maurice Ravel, born at Ciboure in 1875, entered the Conservatoire in 1889 where he studied the piano (with no outstanding success) and was a pupil of

Boléro and the two Concertos for piano and orchestra. For the stage he wrote L'Heure espagnole, L'Enfant et les Sortilèges and the ballet Daphnis et Chloé.

Ravel at first was often considered to be an epigone of Debussy with whom he had in common a certain number of upholders of sincerity whose intentions are always less ingenuous than their technique. With him, technical virtuosity never detracted from the unassuming naivety of his creative spirit."

His innovations, harmonic or otherwise, always have their roots in tradition



Nijinsky and Maurice Ravel at the piano. On the music stand, the score of Daphis and Chloé. Nijinsky introduced this ballet in Paris in 1912 with Karsavina, A. Bohm and the Ballets Russes. Ravel composed the music at the request of Nijinsky.

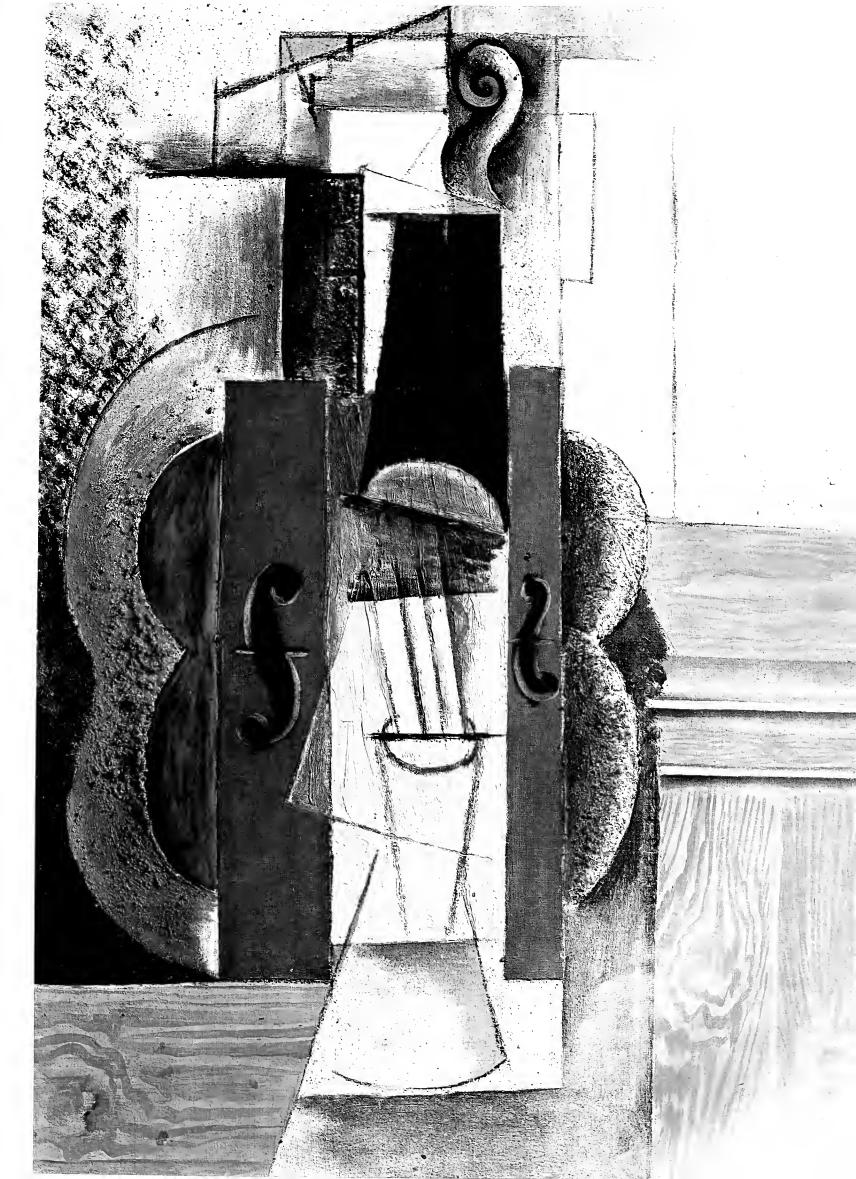
Gédalge for counterpoint and fugue, and of Fauré for composition. Second Grand Prix de Rome in 1901, the tranquil audacities of his harmonic style scandalized the Institute, and his Jeux d'Eau (1901) and above all the Quartet (1902-1903) made it impossible for him ever to receive any academic rewards. His life was entirely devoted to his art until about 1933 when his health, which had never been very robust, was undermined by a cerebral affection from which he died in 1937.

He left some 40 songs, 35 piano pieces (of which the best known are: Jeux d'Eau, the Sonatine, Miroirs, Gaspard de la Nuit and Le Tombeau de Couperin); a Quartet, a Piano Trio, some sonatas, and instrumental solos and, for orchestra, the Rapsodie espagnole, La Valse;

predilections and aversions. In reality they were as unlike as possible: "diametrically opposed" in the opinion of Alfred Casella, who was a good judge and summed up the situation as follows: "While Debussy created, and at the same time exhausted musical impressionism, Ravel remained faithful to classical forms, which he rejuvenated by his admirable innovations." Ravel, in fact, was never so original and personal as when he was imposing on himself the most severe restrictions. "From the beginning to the end of his creative life", says Roland-Manuel, "Ravel used the strictest academic processes as a vehicle for his most startling innovations... Believing only in the virtues of technical perfection (métier), Ravel was the exact opposite of those fanatical

of which they are, so to speak an extension. His genius as an orchestrator, so dazzlingly revealed, for example, in Mussorgsky's Pictures from an Exhibition, is based on the most minute and thorough exploration of every instrumental possibility. His innovations in piano technique—in which he anticipated Debussy: Jeux d'Eau (1901) preceded Jardins sous la pluie (1903)—owe much to the discoveries of Liszt. His chords, even those which at first sight appear most subversive, are based on devices such as appoggiaturas, pedals, etc., ingeniously contrived, but of definitely

Picasso: The Violin. 25 ½"×18". 1913. Derne, Rupf coll. The Cubist painters often introduced shapes of instruments and elements of music into their compositions.





Igor Strawinsky: Le Sacre du Printemps. Last page of the score. Written on the preceeding page is the following comment: "Today 4.X1.1912, Sunday, with an unbearable toothache, I finished the music of the Sacre. Clarens. Hotel Châtelard."

classical origin. But apart from these technical considerations, when we examine the actual substance of his music we see that, in its sobriety conciseness, and ability to evoke and describe by means of allusion and minute nuances, it represents a return to the French preclassical era, to the sensibility of Couperin and Rameau.

### Florent Schmitt, Dukas

The profound contrast between the musical personality of Rayel and that of Florent Schmitt (1870-1958), his

fellow-pupil in Fauré's composition class, is yet another proof of the flexibility of the latter's teaching. In contrast with the concision and objectivity of Ravel's music, Schmitt, even in his earliest works, showed a marked predilection for amplitude, forcefulness and sumptuous orchestration and an unashamed lyrical expansiveness. These traits are most conspicuous in Psalm XLV11 (1904) and the Tragédie de Salomé (1908), and will be found throughout his entire production down to the Symphony

Portrait of Stravinsky by Picasso, drawn in Rome in 1917 when the two men had joined Diaghilev there to work with him. which he began in 1957 at the age of 87 and finished shortly before his death. Schmitt wrote an enormous quantity of music in every genre, ranging from monumental compositions like the Psalm, the Quintet and the String Quartet to small vocal and instrumental pieces in which the craftmanship is as delicate and fine as in anything of Ravel's. Supremely independent as regards the vagaries of fashion and intolerant of theories, he always, to quote a musician who resembles him in many ways, Paul Le Flem, "preferred direct action to manifestoes, and strengthened the modern movement in music by finding new solutions to problems with which others before him had had to deal, alternating strength and vehemence with a profoundly poetical approach."

Paul Dukas (1865-1935) was one of the noblest figures of this privileged generation. He had made a slow start, after receiving a solid classical education and showing no marked enthusiasm for the teaching at the Conservatoire. The only awards he obtained were a first prize for counterpoint and a second Grand Prix de Rome in 1888; but he became friendly with Debussy. He made his début with an overture to Polyeucte in 1892. In 1897 his Symphony in C had a mixed reception, while the Apprenti sorcier, produced a few months later, aroused great enthusiasm-to the great surprise of the composer who confessed that he had intended this scherzo to be "a sort of satire on the symphonic poem". After this, apart from five small occasional pieces, his principal compositions were the Sonata and the Variations, Interlude et Finale sur un thème de Rameau, for piano; the opera Ariane et Barbe-Bleue and La Péri, described as a 'Poème dansé'. Although each one of his works aroused unstinted admiration, an almost pathological mania for perfection caused him to destroy, at





Marc Chagall (on the ladder) in front of the curtain he designed for the New York Ballet Theatre's production of Firebird in 1945. Stravinsky's music was composed thirty five years earlier.

various periods of his life, not only sketches, but important scores whose disappearance has been lamented by those who were privileged to see or hear them. La Péri, one of the masterpieces of contemporary ballet, only narrowly escaped a similar fate. A merciless judge of his own music Dukas, when criticizing other peoples', was a model of fairness tempered with indulgence. His articles in the Revue Hebdomadaire, the Gazette des Beaux-Arts etc. reveal, not only a vast experience of all musical currents of his time but a no less complete familiarity with the old masters, their background and all the literature and philosophy that can throw any light on their artistic ideals. Musical humanism has no finer exponent than Paul Dukas.

### Erik Satie

More than thirty years after the death of Erik Satie (1866-1925) musicians are far from being in agreement as to the place that should be assigned to him in the contemporary movement. He had pursued his studies at the Conservatoire with more fantasy than application before entering upon a career which was a strange mixture of bohemianism in Montmartre and mysticism (membership of the Rosicrucian movement and the founding, by himself, of the Eglise métropolitaine d'Art de Jésus Conducteur), of which he himself laid down the rules. In 1886 he published his first piano pieces, whose harmonic audacities,

especially in the Sarabandes, are most striking. In 1905, in his fortieth year, he entered the Schola Cantorum to study counterpoint. From then on he produced a quantity of pieces for the piano, usually very brief and loaded with humorous titles and annotations. It was his way of reacting against the Impressionist mists and the "sublimity" of Wagner and Franck. He also composed ballets, the latest of which, Relache, caused a scandal (1925), and a chamber oratorio Socrate (1920) on texts from Plato. The monotony of the rest of the work is atoned for by the genuinely moving section describing the Death of Socrates. It should be mentioned that, according to the disciples of Satie, this monotony is really evidence of highly



André Bauchant: painting for the décor of Apollon Musagète. This ballet, with music by Stravinsky, was first presented at the Sarah-Bernhardt Theatre in Paris on June 12th, 1928, Galerie Jeanne Bucher, Paris.

concentrated thought. Perhaps they are right. Where it is difficult to follow them, however, is when they represent their master as the forerunner of Debussy, who, they assert, deliberately borrowed from him his harmonic language and ideas about music in the theatre.

On this point there are documents to which I have already alluded; the notes taken down on the spot at the Conservatoire by the most scrupulous of witnesses, Maurice Emmanuel, later to become a musicologist and an eminent composer. They establish heyond doubt that as early as 1878 the subversive harmonies invented by Debussy created a sensation in Durand's class, that in 1883 he talked to Guiraud about his

ideas on the emancipation of harmony, and that in October 1889 he expounded, again to Guiraud, his conception of lyric drama which quite clearly foresshadows the aesthetic of *Pelléas*. Now the first meeting between Debussy and Satic took place in 1891. We may, however, give Satic the credit of having glimpsed what Debussy conceived clearly and put into practice.

# An independent: Albert Roussel

The personality of Albert Roussel was very different, His vocation did not become apparent until late in life, Born in 1869—his parents were in business he was intended for the Navy and remained in the service, until attaining the rank of Lieutenaut. But the call of music proved too strong, and in 1894 he resigned and began to study theory seriously with Koszul, and later with Giront.

In 1898 he entered the Schola Cantorum where four years later he was put in charge by Vincent d'Indy of a class for counterpoint. I mention this to disprove the charge of amateurism with which his adversaries often reproach him. The Trio Op. 2 (1902) and the Divertissement (1906) should be enough to convince any impartial critic of the contrary.

Roussel himself has defined the different phases of his development. He

distinguishes a first period up to 1913, during which he was "slightly influenced by Debussy, but mainly concerned with the solid 'architecture' advocated hy d'Indy". The Poème de la Forêt, Evocations and Le Festin de l'araignée owe something to Impressionism, while the Trio and the Divertissement have certain thematic and rhythmic features that seem to foreshadow the works of the third period.

1913 to 1926 was a transition period, marked by the opera Padmāvatī, the symphonic poem Pour une fête de printemps and the second Symphony, where the style is transformed, the harmonic sequences become bolder and more harsh, and the 'Debussyste' atmosphere has completely disappeared.

Finally, in his third period the musician seems to have found his definitive mode of expression in the Suite en fa, the Concert pour petit orchestre, the Sinfonietta, the Psaume, the 3rd and 4th symphonies, the ballets Aeneas and Bacchus et Ariane and numerous chamber works.

When in 1937 he succumbed to a heart attack at the height of his creative career, a "style Roussel" began to be adopted by the young generation, not only in France, but in other countries. Bohuslav Martinů, Knudaage Riisager did not conceal their allegiance. Certain features of this style—the most obvious ones-found ready imitators: aggressive rhythms and angular themes in the Allegros; long, flowing melodies in the slow movements; harmonies often based on exotic modes; polyphonic passages where the bass line surrenders some of the preponderance it had acquired since the seventeenth century.

What eluded the imitators was the ardent lyricism with which this music is impregnated. In point of fact, Roussel was not a slave to any method.



# Russia: the emergence of a national school

Before coming to the period which is altogether contemporary we must now cast a backward glance and turn our by an exceptionally rich folk-lore from which it borrowed freely, as well as by a tradition of sacred music often influenced by this folk-lore despite the violent hostility of the Church towards secular song and dance and instrumental music; it also possessed a lyric theatre



Portrait of Alban Berg by Arnold Schoenberg. Detail. Berg, who with Webern was a favorite pupil of Schoenberg's, worked with his teacher in Vienna from 1904 to 1910. Schoenberg, also a painter, exhibited in the "Blaue Reiter" show in Munich of 1911.

attention to the national currents which we have so far hardly touched upon. Some of them only recently took shape, during the last century; others, of longer standing, were for so long dependent on the great European schools that it was possible to pass them by, without being too unjust, in a work of this nature whose scope is limited.

Of all the national movements in music in the nineteenth century, the most important was the Russian. It was deeply rooted in the past and nourished



tradition in which Italian influence predominated. I have sketched above its modest beginnings, but its real history begins with Glinka.

Although in fact Russian music did not begin with Glinka, he was the spiritual father of the first great Russian school which was soon to become at least the equal of those which up till then had dominated Europe. He was also the prototype of the amateur musician, of whom there were many in this school;-of noble birth, self-taught, or at any rate not Conservatory trained (Russia had none before 1862), he managed to acquire enough technique to enable him to produce masterpieces. He was 24 before he decided to devote himself entirely to his art. Eight years later (1836) his opera A life for the Tsar (known as Ivan Sussanine since the revolution) was performed for the first time with great success. Russlan and Ludmila (1842) aroused less interest, although in it the qualities which in the earlier score had been admired for their brilliant promise here had reached their full development. He had achieved a synthesis of Italo-German methods of composition with an authentic Russian musical content, and the use he made of the ancient modes preserved in popu-

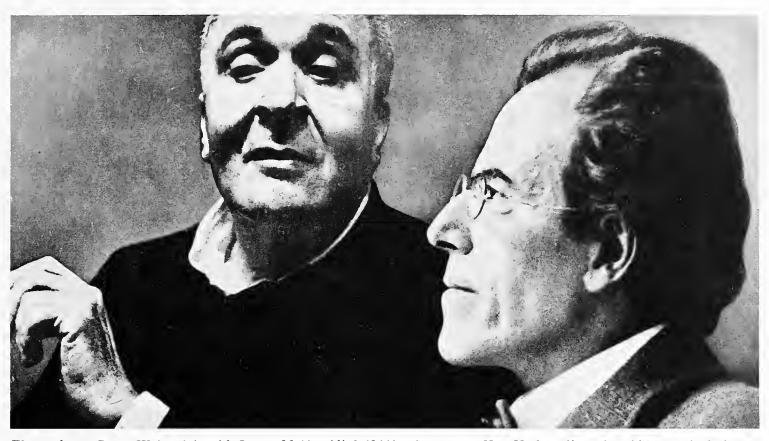
Left, drawing of Webern, who was a pupil of Schoenberg's, by Kokoschka. Far left, photograph of Schoenberg; ManRay, 1925.



lar song showed that he was very conscious of their expressive value and of the possibilities they offered for the rejuvenation of the harmonic language of the day. In Russlan and Ludmila he borrowed from Finnish, Persian and Turkish folk-song, maintaining the typi-

sky of *The Marriage* and *Boris Godounov*. In his last work, *The Stone Guest*, on the theme of Don Juan, he went even further in this direction, and brought the Russian style of recitative to a degree of perfection that not even Mussorgsky would surpass.

left him, one after the other. At the age of forty he found himself virtually alone, his enthusiasm damped and his creative force considerably diminished; nothing he was to write in the second part of his life is as good as *Islamey*, an "Oriental fantasy" for piano, or *Russia*, a sympho-



The conductor Bruno Walter, left, with Gustav Mahler (died 1911), who came to New York to direct the Philharmonic Orchestra.

cal 5/4 and 7/4 rhythms of popular song, made use of the wholetone scale and discovered a host of new orchestral effects.

The works and, above all, the influence of Alexander Dargomijsky (1813-1869) were a very fitting complement to what had been accomplished by Glinka. Selftaught, like his predecessor, only more so (for Glinka had seriously studied harmony and counterpoint with Siegfried Dehn) Dargomijsky had tried his hand at grand romantic operas, but without success. He found the right path by following the example of Glinka: Russalka is a Russian opera on a subject in which legend and folk-lore are mixed. But the two composers differed profoundly in their dramatic conceptions. For Glinka, music took precedence over the text (he even sometimes wrote his music before seeing the words), whereas for Dargomijsky the text came first. He sought a form of musical declamation which would follow closely the inflexions of ordinary speech so as to make the meaning as clear as possible. In this he anticipated Mussorg-

■ Juan Gris: The Violin. 45"×29", 1916.

Paris, private collection.

With Mili Balakirev (1837-1910) we come to the famous "Group of Five" (or "Mighty handful") composed of himself and his four chief disciples, four amateurs named César Cui, Mussorgsky (both army officers), Borodin (chemist) and Rimsky-Korsakov (naval officer).

Balakirev had taught himself composition and orchestration by analysing the works of the great composers. A prodigious memory and an innate feeling for regular harmony and polyphony took the place of the theoretical studies he dispensed with and whose utility, according to Rimsky-Korsakov, "he was apparently unable to appreciate." Nevertheless lie was uncompromisingly dogmatic in his opinions, dismissing Bach as being too abstract, Mozart as too frivolous, Chopin as "an hysterical drawing-room composer", and convinced that the only road to salvation was along the path traced by Glinka, who was his God. An iron will, combined with an almost magnetic personal charm enabled him to impose on those around him his opinions and his curious methods of work which were both empirical and very strict, until his disciples, having at last developed their personality, gradually broke away and nic poem, both conceived prior to 1870.

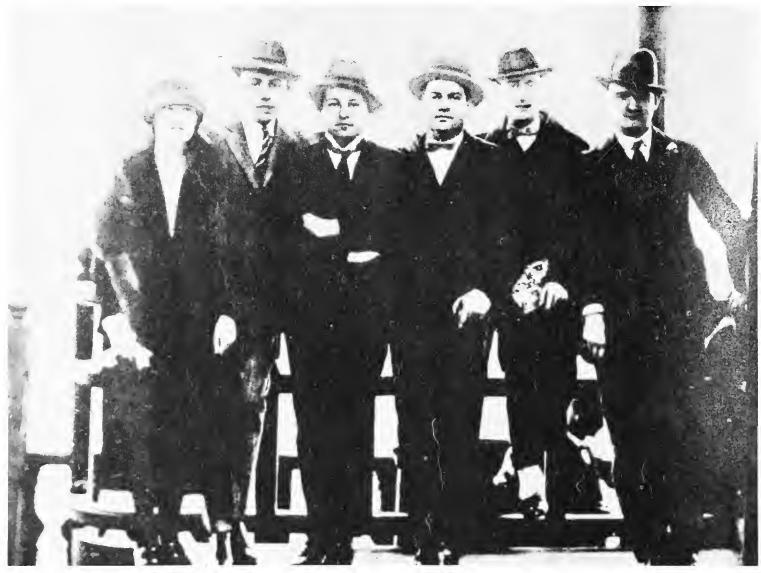
Cesar Cui (1835-1918) need not detain us long, despite his voluminous production: ten operas, some 300 songs and instrumental works for orchestra, string quartet and piano. An impressive output, considering that Cui never gave up his duties as an engineering officer and Professor of fortifications; but, apart from a few fine songs, there is not enough originality in his music to make up for its amateurishness.

Alexander Borodin (1833-1887) was even more absorbed than César Cui by an extremely active scientific career (he was Professor of chemistry at the St. Petersburg Academy) quite apart from the family and social obligations in which he was involved. He could only devote to music his relatively rare and irregular hours of leisure; but his natural gifts and capacity for work enabled Borodin to acquire knowledge and skills that would be the envy of many a professional musician. He played four instruments, was sufficiently advanced in theory to be able to write a fugue every day, in his spare moments, for practice, while the boldness of his harmonies owes nothing to chance or mere empiricism. Although he produced relatively little,

through lack of time, nearly all his works have survived. A place of honour is still reserved in the theatre and the concert hall for his symphonic poem In the steppes of Central Asia, his three symphonies (the last unfortunately unfinished), his two quartets, the Petite

was about twenty and had made the acquaintanee of Dargomijsky and Balakirev. The latter's powers of persuasion were strong enough to induce Mussorgsky to resign from his regiment, the Preobrajensky, of which he was a lieutenant. Deprived soon afterwards of the

must, without exaggeration or violence, become music, faithfully observing natural inflexions, but at the same time be artistic in every respect..." Hence the increasingly exact, incisive and varied declamation, of Marriage (1868), Boris Godounov (1868-1872) and Khovantschina.



The five main composers of the Groupe des Six, photographed on the Eiffel Tower with Jean Cocteau, animateur of the group. From left to right: Germaine Tailleferre, Francis Poulenc, Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Cocteau and Auric (missing: Durey).

Suite for piano, the songs, and, finally, Prince Igor which he was unable to finish, but was completed by Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov. Prince Igor, with its vivid Russo-Oriental colour exuberantly epic spirit, and the richness of its melodic inspiration, so admirably adapted to the resources of both soloists and chorus, was for Borodin an "essentially national" opera which "had no real interest" except for Russians. In point of fact, few operatic works have enjoyed such universal success.

Of the five members of the "mighty handful" grouped round Balakirev, Modeste Mussorgsky (1839-1881) was undoubtedly the most gifted. He, too, had begun as an amateur. Of noble extraction, he was quite a talented pianist when he began his military career which came to an end when he

income from his landed property as a result of the edict abolishing serfdom, he was forced to accept a minor post in a government office where he vegetated until his death, growing more and more solitary and impoverished, and ruining his already feeble constitution with excessive drinking. And it was during this sombre period that he worked out the dramatic theories which gave us Boris and Khovantschina. For in spite of appearances, which he took no trouble to disguise, he had very soon turned his back on the dilettantism of his early years. A fervent believer in the theories of Dargomijsky, he wished his music to be, as he put it, "a reproduction of the spoken language in all its linest shades. In other words, the sounds of human speech considered as outward manifestations of thought and emotions

This passionate quest for naturalism called for a more emancipated technique, which was forthcoming in such an uncompromising form that its hold innovations have been attributed to Mussorgsky's so-called amateurism. With the best will in the world, Rimsky-Korsakov, in his edition of Boris, set out to correct what he thought were mistakes in Mussorgsky's harmonies. For this he has been bitterly reproached-nearly half a century later! But it must not be forgotten that a musician in the 'eighties could justifiably be disconcerted by innovations introduced with so little circumspection, that Boris, if given unexpurgated at that time, would have been doomed to failure, and that finally Rimsky-Korsakov himself, after having gratuitously taken on the enormous task of this revision, made the following

statement: "In revising the work I have not destroyed the original text: the primitive frescoes are merely hidden under new colours, but they are still there. If one day it is felt that the original is better than my version, then this can be discarded and Boris can be given in its original form..." Rimsky, moreover, contributed substantially to make Mussorgsky famous by helping him, during his life-time, to orchestrate more than one passage in Boris, and by completing, after his sketches, his only symphonic poem. a Night on the Bare Mountain.

A more thorough study might be undertaken to assess the place of Boris and Khovantschina in the evolution of the lyric theatre, and to show, not only their profound originality in the sphere of popular drama, but how the novelty of their conception has called for new techniques—as can be seen for example —in the way the chorus is used. Mussorgsky's songs, especially the cycles entitled Enfantines, Sans Soleil, Chants et danses de la Mort and his Pictures from an exhibition for piano, are no less significant. In every genre which he attempted, Mussorgsky has created imperishable works.

Like his friends in the Group of Five, Nicholas Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908) began as an amateur. He was 29 when he gave up his career as a naval officer to become Inspector of music in the Navy. He had already done some composition with very little training. He knew Balakirev, who told him to write a symphony—the first in the repertoire of Russian music (1869). In 1871, while he was still a sailor, he was asked to take a class at the St. Petersburg Conservatory in composition and orchestration which he had hardly studied at all. He was bold enough to accept, worked hard, and at the end of five years had acquired an infallible technique and method of teaching. He was attracted especially by the orchestra and lyric theatre, and composed 15 operas, of which the hest known are: Snegourotchka, Sadko, Tzar Saltan, Le  $Coq \ d'Or$  and, the finest of all, although not yet accorded the recognition it deserves. La Légende de la ville invisible de Kitège. Here Rimsky-Korsakov, abandoning the fantastic world of pagan legend, discovers with delight the wonders of Christianity. No other work refutes so completely the charge of dryness with which he is so often accused because of his pedagogic activities, although in another sphere, that of orchestral imagination, the falseness of the charge is further demonstrated by such works as Shéhérazade and

Marc Chagall: The Green Violinist. 77"×4212". 1918. Solomon Guggenheim Museum, New York.





Drawing by Nathalie Gontcharova for Noces, a suite of choreographic scenes with music by Stravinsky. The first performance was on June 13th, 1923 in Paris.

Capriccio espagnol which, though far too often performed on the radio and in the concert hall in every country in the world, have yet preserved their freshness and vitality.

# Beyond "The Five": Tchaikovsky

At the same time that the "Five" were prospering with their Russo-Asiatic folk-lore, a rival school was being set up, with definitely academic tendencies following in the steps of the German romantics. As it presents less novel

features, I shall deal with it even more briefly than with the Five.

Its moving spirit, Anton Rubinstein (1829-1894) was best known as a pianist, and was the first Russian to win world renown in that capacity. Of his very mimerous compositions, only one opera, The Demon, has survived, although one may well prefer his Persian Melodies with their oriental flavour which recalls Borodin. In his capacity of teacher, he founded the two oldest conservatories in the country, one at St. Petersburg in 1862, and the other in Moscow in 1867. The tendencies of their teaching were curiously different, St. Petersburg favouring "absolute" music, free from

D. Shostakovitch, the Soviet composer.

any descriptive or expressive intentions, while Moscow encouraged a subjective attitude and thought that music should reflect the composer's emotions, thoughts and outlook on life, as we shall see in the case of Skriabin.

The most remarkable product of the Moscow Conservatoire was undoubtedly Piotr Ilytch Tehaikovsky (1840-1893) who entered it at the age of 23 after having combined, like so many others, the roles of amateur and Government employee. His works are still so popular and so often played, danced and recorded that I will confine myself to a very brief notice. He wrote eleven operas (the most famous are Eugene Onegin and The Queen of Spades), symphonic music, chamber music and sacred music in abundance. In almost all his works his emotions are spontaneoulsy displayed, sometimes to the detriment of their form; few composers have been less anxious to conceal their feelings. As to the more or less Russian character of his inspiration, opinions are divided. The "Five" and most Western musicians have for long reproached him for his cosmopolitanism and Germanic tendencies; today many of his compatriots, led by Stravinsky, consider him to be the most authentically 'national' of their predecessors.

With the generation that succeeded Tchaikovsky, from the moment even when Rimsky-Korsakov began to teach at the St. Petersburg Conservatory (1871), there were signs of a reconciliation between the Nationalists (the "Five") on the one hand and the so-called "Westerners" (Tchaikovsky) on the other. It can be seen in the case of Alexander Glazunov (1869-1936) an astonishingly precocious musician whose first symphony, written at the age of 16, astounded its hearers. Influenced for a time by Rimsky-Korsakov (cf. Stenka



Razine etc.) he later turned to 'pure' music and produced 8 symphonies and 6 quartets in which he showed himself to be a master of counterpoint; even in his minor works the virtuosity of the writing and orchestration are impressive.

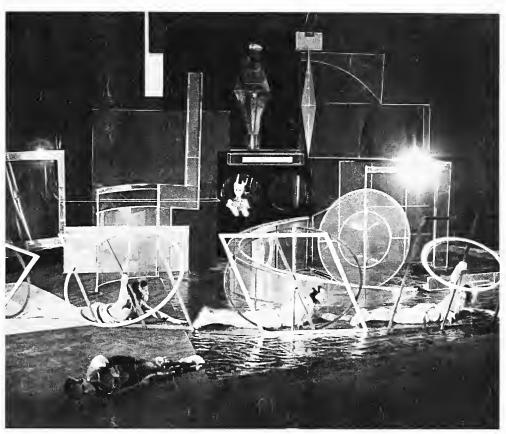
There is much of merit in the works of Arensky, Liadov, Rachmaninov (whose Concertos and Preludes for piano have unjustly eclipsed some excellent songs), of Liapounov, Tcherepnin, Medtner and Serge Taneiev that great contrapuntist and eminent teacher who had as his pupil Alexander Skriabin (1872-1915) who, however, did not remain long under his guidance.

A part of Skriabin's works bears witness to a veritable cult for Chopin; later he shows enthusiasm for Debussy, Strauss and Wagner. At this moment he began to elaborate a philosophicomusical system aiming at a synthesis of all the arts. In his symphony Prometheus he established a rigorous correspondence between chords in the orchestra and sequences of coloured light thrown on a screen. The symphony was based on a certain "mystic chord" made up of super-imposed fourths. (C-Fsharp-B flat-E-A-D: i.e. two augmented fourths, one diminished fourth, and two perfect fourths. Classical harmony was based essentially on the common chord and the chord of the seventh, made up of thirds.) Although he may have failed in his aim to identify music with a nebulous system of theosophy or cosmogony, his Divine Poem, his Poème de l'Extase and the last Piano Sonatas have opened a way to new modes of expression. Some of his preoccupations are reflected in the works of a pupil of Glière, Nicholas Miaskovsky (1881-1950) a prolific composer of 27 symphonies who was later obliged to subscribe to an official and much less audacious aesthetic.



All the composers we have noticed after the "Five" and Tchaikovsky [and many others not devoid of merit too numerous to mention here] appear insignificant in the presence of two creative artists of a very different calibre, Stravinsky and Prokofiev.

hesitating whether to take up law or musical composition when; in 1902, his meeting with Rimsky-Korsakov, who agreed to give him lessons, decided his career. The success of one of his earliest orchestral works, Feu d'Artifice (1908) attracted the attention of Serge de



Décor for La Chatte, the first "constructivist" ballet, with décors and costumes by the sculptors Gabo and Pevsner. The music was by Henri Sauguet, libretto by Boris Kochno; the original performance took place in Monte Carlo on April 30th, 1927.

### Stravinsky

The son of a singer, a bass soloist at the Imperial Chapel, Igor Stravinsky (born at Oranienbaum in 1882) was



Diaghilev, the leader of an avant-garde movement who dreamed of staging productions in which music, dancing and scenery would be equally important. For the festival he was to give in Paris in 1910 Diaghilev commissioned a ballet from Stravinsky: The Firebird, the first great discovery of the Ballets Russes which, until the death of their founder in 1929 were to be one of the most powerful ferments in the musical life of Europe. It was for them that Stravinsky wrote Petroushka (1911), the Rites of Spring (1913), The Nightingale (1913), Fulcinella (1919) etc. The Firebird showed the influence of Rimsky-Korsakov and, in a certain degree, that of Debussy; but a real personality was revealed in the use of instrumental timbres, in the violent rhythmic impulses and a science of construction from which all empty rhetoric was excluded.

The following work, Petroushka, was still more original. Renouncing the mists of Impressionism and the restrictions of academic counterpoint, Stravinsky adopted a resolutely diatonic

Left, Serge Prokofiev drawn by Matisse in 1921. Far left, Paul Hindemith.



Georges Auric's score for Les Fâcheux composed for Dhiaghilev in 1924. Georges Braque designed the sets and costumes and painted this sketch on the last page of the score.

style coupled with an emancipated harmonic language in which major and minor thirds in the same key are heard together, while the composer does not hesitate to superimpose chords of the tonic and dominant, or common chords in different and completely unconnected keys.

These audacities, however, were mild, indeed, in comparison to those which on May 29th, 1913 provoked a veritable scandal at the première of the Rites of Spring. Many of the audience believed that a monstrous joke was being perpetrated, or else that some revolutionary plot was being hatched. In order to evoke the idea of life emerging from primitive chaos, the composer had forged a new language, depending not so much

on a harmonic system already fore-shadowed in *Petroushka*, as on a prodigiously elaborate orchestration and, above all, on an absolutely unprecedented intensity and variety of rhythmic impulses.

Cunningly a-symmetric rhythms, or long percussive ostinato passages evoked the struggle of obscure forces seeking their way towards order and light. (In parenthesis, Stravinsky later on introduced these rhythmic formulae into works where they did not have the same character of necessity; and so great an impression did they produce on other composers that for more than twenty years it has hardly been possible to hear a symphony in which some sort of rhythmic diversion derived from the

Augures printaniers is not inserted, whether apposite or not.)

The inspiration of The Rites of Spring is found again in Noces, a "ballet chanté" with an orchestra consisting of a strong percussion section and four pianos which are themselves treated as percussive instruments, without a single melodic instrument. After this Stravinsky has never ceased to progress spasmodically along many different paths, not always with the happiest results, the only constant factor being his almost infallible technical mastery. Each work seems to pose a fresh problem, whether it is The Soldier's Tale, Renard, Mavra, Apollon Musagetes, Oedipus Rex, etc., etc. or more recently, The Rakes's Progress or Threni in which Stravinsky adopts the compositional technique of the young Viennese school.

As to the motives and results of all these metamorphoses opinions are divided, and it would no doubt be useless to attempt a final summing up. All that can be said is that during the definitely ercative period that preceded his neoclassic and other experiments Stravinsky made his mark no less decisively than a Monteverdi, a Wagner or a Debussy.

# Prokofiev, his contemporaries and successors

In the eyes of those accustomed to judge composers only in terms of the shock they have administered to the musical sensibilities of their contemporaries, Serge Prokofiev (1891-1953) is not to be compared to his compatriot (compatriot by birth, for Stravinsky, having refused to return to his country after the Revolution, has acquired in turn French and American nationality). But if we consider the absolute value of Prokofiev's works and the enormous gap that would be left if they were to disappear, the distance that separates them seems to shrink. Prokofiev is a great musician, but a musician of moods, free from all theoretical prejudices, and one in whom it would be difficult to discern a continuous development. His early works showed a definite predilection for corrosive harmonies and aggressive rhythms (the Sarcasmes for piano, the Scythian Suite, Chout, Le Pas d'Acier); but during the same period the Symphonic classique, Visions fugitives and whole movements in the piano sonatas reflect a more tranquil mood. After his return to Russia in 1935 he was obliged to conform to current aesthetic notions; but works like Lieutenant Kijé or Peter and the Wolf, the most charming piece of 'educational' music ever written for young people, show that he had not changed. Throughout his career his music was always

tonal, and his use of polytonality and atonality only served to emphasize this feature, just as its diatonic character was only enhanced by his use of chromatic harmonies. His rhythms are straightforward, mainly binary. The abundance of his melodic invention renders development unnecessary. He modulates with the greatest freedom, and has a very characteristic way of returning suddenly to the original key with a sort of unexpected pirouette. As regards orchestration, he is a worthy pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov, if possible, even more incisive.

As far as can be judged, creative music in the USSR would seem today to be on the downward grade. Musical talent is not scarce, as witness the number and quality of executants formed there, artists like Guillels, David Oistrakh, Kogan, Richter, etc. But an official aesthetic, based no doubt on respectable principles, has a singularly cramping effect on composers' inspiration. Thus Dmitri Shostakovitch (1906) who was so precocious that Glazunov when admitting him at the age of 13 to the Leningrad Conservatory gave him, out of his own pocket, a scholarship for the entire period of his studies, was pulled up short in 1936, in the middle of his career, and accused of modernistic deviationism. In his first symphonies, his operas The Nose and Lady Macbeth of Mzensk, his ballets The Golden Age and The Bolt he expressed himself in an advanced idiom, atonal or polytonal on occasions, often reflecting the influence of Prokofiev. After 1936 he was obliged to give up exploring these new realms, at any rate in his orchestral or choral works intended for the masses. But in this new and extremely abundant production it was impossible for a musician of his calibre not to return from time to time to his original vein, and it is in his chamber music, the quartets and the magnificent Piano

Quintet, that he continues to be himself,

After him, the best known Soviet composers are Dimitri Kabalevsky (1904), a pupil of Miaskovsky and author of numerous concertos, symphonies and incidental music marked by a freshness and humour which recall Poulenc, and

Music in the U.S.A.

If this History also included musical ethnography it ought then to devote a number of chapters to the folk-lore of the two Americas, before and after the



Aaron Copland gives a cue at a rehearsal of one of his compositions.

Aram Khatchaturian (1904) who has made skilful use of the varied and rhythmically complex folk music of his native Armenia. His music is brilliant, lively and highly coloured; his best known works are the Concerto for violin and the ballet Gayaneh of which the famous Sword Dance is a part. It is worth noting that long before his time Alexander Spendiarov (1871-1928) had made no less effective use of Armenian folk-lore in his opera Queen Almast.

European penetration. A study of this folk-lore, whose riches have not yet been exhausted or recorded, would gain in interest from the fact that there has been a constant interchange, in both directions, between the music imported from the old Continent and that of the aborigines or slaves imported from Africa. In the United States the "Negro spirituals", of which the first collection, Slave songs of the United States, dates from 1867, preserve traces of the hymns and psalms sung by the Puritans when they arrived in 1620 in Massachusetts; on the other hand, the "minstrel songs", composed before the middle of the nineteenth century by white men and destined to be sung in the streets by singers disguised as negroes, borrowed from the latter their lyricism and syncopated rhythms.

Still in the context of traditional European music, it may be briefly recalled that there were operatic performances as early as the eighteenth century, that a Saint Cecilia Society was created at Charleston in 1762, that in the nineteenth century America was visited by many famous virtuosi and singers (Thalberg, Ole Bull, Jenny Lind, etc.) and that in 1845 the first American

Fernand Léger: sketch for a set of Bolivar, an opera by Darius Milhaud, first performed in Paris on May 12th, 1950. opera. Leonora by William Fry, was produced at Philadelphia. It was said to be full of good intentions, but "a flagrant imitation of Bellini and Donizetti".

The first composer of 'serious music' worth mentioning was John Knowles Paine (1839-1906), who was both pedagogue and symphonist; but the first whose music crossed the Atlantic was Edward MacDowell (1861-1908). Trained in Europe (Paris and later Frankfurt), he used in his Indian Suite Indian themes treated in an amiably civilized manner. His style sometimes recalls Grieg. Charles M. Læfller (1861-1939), born at Mulhouse and a violinist in the Pasdeloup orchestra before settling in the USA, belonged rather to the Impressionist school.

An intensely original composer was Charles Ives (1874-1954). Practically self-taught, he was already in 1894 anticipating Schoenberg and Stravinsky in his experiments with atonality, polytonality and a-symmetric rhythms, etc. He was so sure that it would be a long time before his music would be understood that he decided not to make it his profession. He made a fortune in insurance and, as he had foretold, it was not until 1954 that a symphony composed in 1902 had its first performance.

His masterpiece is probably the enormous Concord Sonata for the piano 1910 which not only presents transcendent technical difficulties but, with its philosophical and poetic quotations from Emerson, Hawthorne, etc., is clearly the work of a visionary and

shows great imagination.

Shortly after Ives. Charles Griffes 1884-1920 , who was influenced by his master Humperdinck, the French Impressionists and Skriabin, nevertheless succeeded in finding a personal idiom although a less aggressive one than that adopted by Charles Ruggles and Henry Cowell who from 1910 to 1920 employed a violently dissonant counterpoint, using chords that defy analysis and are really nothing but blocks of sound. In order to play what Cowell called his "toneclusters" the pianist must strike the keyboard with both his fore-arms outstretched! Similar tendencies were displayed by musicians who came from Europe such as Edgar Varèse 1885), Leo Ornstein 1895 who certainly had a greater influence on George Antheil 1900-1959 than his master Ernest Bloch. Antheif's Ballet meranique for eight pianos, hattery and several machines of a non-musical nature gave rise in 1927 in New York, Paris and elsewhere to a miniature seasonal scandal of the kind provoked today by John

Georges Braque; The Guitar Player, 86 - 11°, 1917; Kunstmuseum, Basle, Bosque v. a great music lover; he entitled was of his early pictures Aria de Bach.



Cage and his "prepared" pianos; this is the term he applies to pianos in which all sorts of objects are inserted to prevent the normal vibration of the strings so that measureable intervals can no longer be played. Cage has evolved an organized system from which tonality the Old World, such as Ernest Bloch, Hindemith, Darius Milhaud, Schoenherg, etc.; and a great many Americans come to Paris, Berlin or Vienna to gain a wider outlook. (It is in this way that Nadia Boulanger has played an important part in the formation of topAmerican Conservatory at Fontainehleau and, at the instigation of Nadia Boulanger, he wrote a symphony with organ which was followed by three other symphonies, a score or so of various symphonic works, five ballets, choruses, incidental and film music and



A candid photograph of Arturo Toscanini taken during a rehearsal.

and the principles of mathematical development are excluded. Lou Harrison (1917) and other young composers are carrying out in neighbouring spheres experiments from which perhaps music is more likely to benefit.

This parenthesis on the avant-garde experimental school shows us only one aspect of musical production in the United States. In point of fact the range of tendencies is as wide there as it is in Europe owing to the eclecticism of the teaching methods. In addition to teachers like Aaron Copland, Walter Piston, Roger Sessions, etc., who are the leading national composers, the universities and colleges, whose number, quality and technical equipment may well arouse our envy, have extended a welcome to a number of distinguished musicians from

ranking musicians like Copland, Walter Piston, Roy Harris, Virgil Thomson, etc.)

Having no space in which to describe the main characteristics of their art, nor those of other composers such as William Schuman, Samuel Barber, Paul Creston and Norman dello Joio whose works are played now all over the world, I will attempt a brief biographical sketch of the one who seems to me the most representative, both in his works and influence, namely Aaron Copland. Born in New York in 1900, he studied the piano from an early age before taking up composition. At the age of 18 he took lessons from Goldmark, a sound pedagogue, but too reactionary for the taste of a young man whose gods were Scriabin, Debussy and Ravel. Copland was the first to enter the newly founded

instrumental compositions. His most popular works are no doubt the Quiet City for trumpet, cor anglais and strings and the ballet Appalachian spring. He was one of the first to draw systematically on the resources of jazz, but he soon moved on and forged for himself a coherent language whose rhythmic complexity is closely bound up with the refinements of his harmony and orchestration. At opposite ends of his production two main currents can be distinguished—one of a more popular kind in which he borrows freely from American folk-lore, and the other, more abstract, which finds expression in his Third Symphony (1946) and the Fantasy for piano (1958).

Copland's career is by no means exclusively devoted to composition. He

has always been active, whether as concert organizer, lecturer or critic, in helping to make the music of his compatriots better known abroad, and in doing the same for European music in his own country. These notes would be too incomplete if I omitted to mention the part played by George Gershwin (1898-1937), Gian Carlo Menotti (1911) and Leonard Bernstein (1918) in the creation of a specifically American national opera expressly designed to bring art to the masses without thereby renouncing the right to employ all the resources of a more sophisticated art. No student of light opera could afford to ignore such works as Gershwin's Porgy and Bess, Menotti's The Medium and The Consul and Bernstein's West Side Story. Nor is it possible in this outline of musical life in the United States to omit some mention of the influence of jazz on serious music.

### Music in Latin America

Latin America, although slower to adopt the more elaborate forms of European music, is rapidly forging ahead, and is fortunate in possessing a folk-lore of inexhaustible richness. In Mexico, after Manuel Ponce, a symphonist of the school of Paul Dukas (whose austere personality has for long been masked by the success of the song of his youth Estrellita), the leader of the modern movement is Carlos Chávez (1899). He borrows from Indian music its characteristic modes and the 'polyphony of timbres' which is a feature of its orchestras. Rejecting the facile attractions of local colour, it is through their 'internal rhythm' that the Sinfonia India, the Concertos and the cantata El Sol take their place among the creations of national art.

In Brazil Heitor Villa-Lobos (1889) has written works which owe much less to any 'system' and more to instinct; some are miniatures and logically constructed; others could be described as chaos in sound where the 'polyphony of timbres' is very dissimilar to that practised by Chávez. Villa-Lobos has even attempted, sometimes successfully, to effect a synthesis of popular Brazilian music and pre-classical European music: e.g. the Bachianas Brasileiras. By the diversity and abundance of his production, not always strictly controlled, he might be compared to Darius Milhaud. Latin America has produced many other musicians of merit of whom I will mention: in Mexico, Silvestre Revueltas; in Brazil, Camargo Guarnieri; in Chili, Domingo Santa-Cruz; in Argentina, Juan José Castro; in Uruguay, Alfonso Broqua—and the list is by no means exhaustive.

### Return to Europe

We must return now to contemporary Europe. It is not surprising that we have had to turn back from time to time to glance at countries whose musical development has for a long time been too retarded to warrant their inclusion in a broad survey such as this, or at others which we dealt with when they were at the height of their glory, but neglected after their decline.

When dealing with modern times the historian is confronted with grave difficulties which it would be useless to conceal, and which are aggravated by the limitations of a work such as this.

It is therefore wiser to resign oneself to considering tendencies rather than individuals, only making exceptions in the case of musicians who have exercised an undeniable influence, either through the force of their genius (e.g. Stravinsky) or because of the notoriety they have acquired which has turned them into a kind of sociological phenomenon; this does not mean, however, that the composers we shall be mentioning here are not really more important. Musicologists in 1980 will perhaps have a clearer vision of the scale of values prevailing in 1959; but let us remember, in all humility, that the musicologists of 1959 are still unable to agree as to the rightful place of Erik Satie among the musicians of 1900.

On the eve of the first world war there was in music, as in the other arts, a feverish impulse to break with the past and start afresh, which the gigantic struggle did little to restrain. This desire for rejuvenation showed itself in various directions, sometimes obeying the irresistible urge of a creative temperament (cf. the Stravinsky of Rites of Spring), sometimes animated by a spirit of 'wanting to go one better', and sometimes the result of a genuine conviction that the resources of the tonal system with which we have lived since the Renaissance were exhausted, and that something else must be put in its place.

# Schoenberg, Berg and Webern

This was the attitude of Schoenberg and his disciples. At first and for a long time their movement was only of interest to professional musicians and made no impression on the general public. Things have changed during the last fifteen years. But we must not anticipate.

Arnold Schoenberg (born Vienna 1874, died Los Angeles 1951) was twenty before he devoted himself entirely to composition. Apart from a few lessons in counterpoint from Alexander Zemlinsky, he had received no systematic teaching. He was therefore practically

selftaught, and it is therefore not surprising that his first works of any importance—Verklaerte Nacht for string sextet (1899), the Gurrelieder, a secular oratorio having the dimensions of an opera and the symphonic poem Pelléas et Mélisande (1902) were saturated with various influences, mainly those of Wagner, Mahler and Richard Strauss. His aim was now to free himself from this bondage.

The chromaticism of Tristan and Isolde was significant in the context of the tonal system; that of Schoenberg, in his songs Op. 6 and 8, his first quartet Op. 7, the Kammersinfonie Op. 9 (1906), goes more and more against this system. The counterpoint in the Kammersinfonie ignores almost completely the restrictions which up till then had maintained a close connection between the language of polyphony and vertical harmony. But this counterpoint becomes easier to follow than that of the traditional orchestra, thanks to a reduction in the instrumental forces which throws each individual timbre into greater relief: fifteen executants, all soloists; whereas the Gurrelieder calls for 8 flutes, 7 clarinets, 10 horns and the rest in propor-

I will only indicate the main phases in Schoenberg's later development. In 1908, in the Fifteen Songs on poems by Stefan Georg, tonality is completely abandoned. The common chord, if it does occur, has no longer, in this context, any functional significance. The melodrama Erwartung (1909) is a sort of manifesto of what is sometime called "German impressionism" as opposed to French, or else "expressionism": a sort of hyper-romanticism geared to dramatic emotions and situations resembling in their violence those dear to the Italian "verists", but depicted in an infinitely more complex musical language that seeks to penetrate the inmost thoughts, and even the sub-conscious mind of the hero. Erwartung has only one character—a distracted woman who goes to meet her lover in the forest and stumbles over his corpse. It is a kind of recitative which creates at times an almost unbearable tension, exacerbated by an orchestration at once rich and sinister that seems to foreshadow the Wozzeck of Alban Berg. Composed in the same year, the Five Pieces, Op. 16, inaugurate a new method of treating the full symphony orchestra, by splitting it into small groups of soloists whose composition is constantly changing so as to produce an extreme variety of colour. The transparency and concision of the score will hardly be surpassed by Webern: one piece uses only 9 instruments and lasts 19 seconds!

Matisse: The Piano Lesson 8'½"× ► 6'11¾". 1916-1917. Museum of Modern Art, Guggenheim collection, New York.





Strawinsky conducts at a recording session.

In Pierrot Lunaire 1912, a voice singing in concert with 5 instruments uses almost exclusively Sprechgesang, a form of musical declamation midway between song and speech, of which examples can be found in the Gurrelieder.

Once the tonal system was abolished together with all the structures based upon it, it was essential to find a new principle for the organization of sound. This is what Schoenberg attempted to do by decreeing that all the twelve semitones in the chromatic tempered scale are equal and independent of one another, and by introducing as from 1923. serial dodecaphony. Every composition is based on the 12 semitones arranged, at the beginning, in an order which will remain the same throughout the piece, but can be diversified by having recom-e to the devices of the old contrapuntali ter augmentation, diminution, in erion, retrograde movement and retrograde movement inverted. This is not the place to enter into the details of a complicated theory, full of restrictions and prohibitions designed to prevent even a passing evocation of the old tonality. This rigidity, which conflicted with Schoenberg's lyrical temperament, has had an adverse effect on the works in which he has applied his theories strictly, and no doubt this contradiction between the theoretician and the artist accounts for the return to tonality which can be observed in varying degrees in the works of his last period.

Indissolubly linked with the name of Schoenberg are those of his two nearest disciples Berg and Webern.

The evolution of Alban Berg (1881-1935 was on the same lines, only more rapid, as that of his master—that is to say he progressed from tonality to atonality and thence to the dodecaphonic technique, reverting in the end to an attempt to reconcile the serial and tonal systems. Intensely romantic by temperament, even more so than Schoenberg, he sought to counteract this tendency by subjecting himself to the severest discipline in his style of writing.

It is in Wozzeck, his masterpiece, that this duality is most clearly seen. Composed between 1917 and 1921 on a libretto which he himself adapted from a play by Buchner, this opera exploits to the full the pathos of a particularly gloomy subject, although each scene is east in the rigorous mould of a predetermined musical form—fugue, sonata, scherzo, etc. Unlike the "verist" opera on which the libretto is based, the heart of the matter is not to be found here either in the words or in the action, but in the atmosphere of hallucination which pervades this drama of anguish, despair

Raoul Dufy: Orchestra Instruments, ► 7<sup>1</sup>2" + 20". 1945. L. Carré Gall., Paris.

and murderous insanity. To attempt to express a chaos of ideas, sensations and disordered emotions in classical musical forms was a gamble and a challenge, but one that Berg successfully brought off -even in his instrumental works. The sub-titles of the Suite Lyrique (1926) for string quartet are most significant in this respect: allegro gioviale, andante amoroso, allegro misterioso (with its trio estatico), adagio appassionato, presto delirando, largo desolato. In the Violin Concerto (1935) the last movement of which is based on a Bach choral, he succeeded in blending more intimately than ever before expressionism and absolute music on the one hand, and dodecaphony and the old tonal system on the other.

To attempt to explain Schoenberg in a few paragraphs was hazardous, and still more so in the case of Alban Berg. As regards Anton (von) Webern (1883-1945) it is obvious that it would take more than a page in which to dissect a delicate mechanism of unprecedented subtlety, especially as Webern's technique is the result of conceptions which, if they became general, would lead to a revolution far more drastic than that begun by Schoenberg. Not a violent or noisy one; his music is nearly always extremely quiet and restrained. His compositions are generally very short, often lasting less than a minute, but organized with every kind of refinement applying not only to melodic line, harmony and counterpoint (all completely atonal) but also to stress and dynamics, timbre and "attack". He makes a systematic use of the Klangfarbenmelodie which Schoenberg employs in the third of his Five Pieces, Op. 16: this procedure consists in distributing the serial pattern between various instruments in single notes or groups of notes in such a way that the colour is contin-

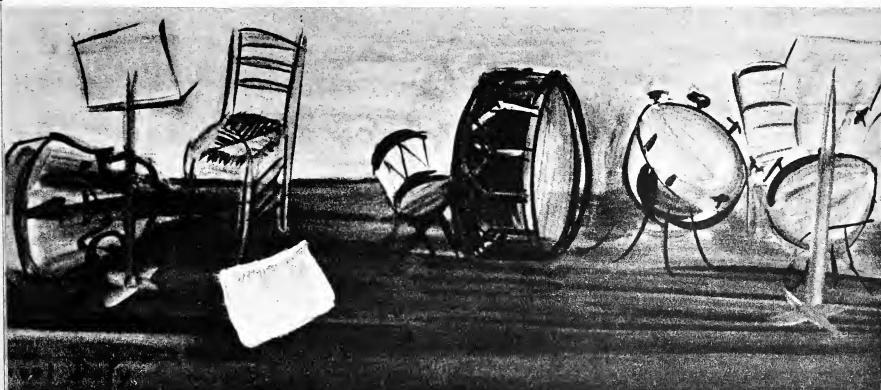
ually changing.

The kaleidoscope of orchestral colour thus created certainly makes it difficult to distinguish the line followed by the individual voices. One of Webern's disciples and most enthusiastic supporters has recently referred to the extent to which the composer, when hearing his own music, relied on his imagination and was perhaps the victim of illusions which enabled him to see in it a continuity that no one else can

After having for a long time aroused the hostility of musicians, these obstacles are now proving an attraction to which Stravinsky himself has suc-cumbed. In the opinion of some musicians this art, which represents a complete break with the past and calls for a kind of 'divination' on the part of the performer, contains in itself the germs of the music of the future. Others do not believe that the discoveries of Schoenberg and Webern can compensate for the abandonment of a system of tonal or modal attractions, harmonies, modulations, etc., carefully built up over a period of more than twenty centuries. Others, again, consider that Webern has exhausted the resources of the indisputably new domain which he discovered. From the way in which his followers are continually serving up the same monotonous successions of disjointed intervals, a limited number of trivial orchestral 'effects', (harmonics, pizzicati, strings struck with the back of the bow, tremolos on the flute etc.) it would seem that those taking this view are right; the future will decide.

### German composers: Hindemith

While the Schoenberg school, centred in Vienna, was continuing to develop, in Germany a composer was growing up, sufficiently gifted and equipped to escape this influence: Paul Hindemith (1895). Brought up as a kind of musical craftsman, having earned his living as an orchestral player before entering a conservatory (he was a violin virtuoso at the age of 13 and leader of the orchestra at the Frankfurt Opera when he was 20), he was lucky enough to find in the 'métier' a constant stimulant to invention instead of a deadening routine. He has often changed his style sometimes, it would seem, capriciously, although usually these changes correspond to a logical development in his thought. After paying tribute to romanticism, and even expressionism until his Suite for piano in 1922, he then became a convert to the neo-classicism which characterizes the Kammermusik Concertos and other chamber music of the period 1923-1930. The style is mainly contrapuntal, the counterpoint being of a highly developed order, having nothing in common with the polyphonic deformations practised by his imitators. Furthermore, he does not allow himself to become the slave of a formula, as is proved by the song-cycle Marienleben on poems by R. M. Kilke (1924), the opera Cardillac (1926), the two operabouffes Hin und zurück (1927) and Neues vom Tage (1929), and the instrumental and vocal works intended for amateurs (Gebrauchsmusik). After 1930 a new harmonic approach is revealed, especially in the choreographic symphony Nobilissima visione and in the opera





Béla Bartók, photographed in New York shortly before his death, in 1944.

Mathis der Maler whose finest pages have been arranged as an admirable triptych for concert performance. About this time Hindemith in his treatise Unterweisung im Tonsatz (1937) expounded a theory of composition based on the nature of sounds and the physiological conditions governing their audibility; the scientific bases for his theory are broad and sound enough to explain almost every existing musical system, including atonality.

Although a contemporary of Hindemith, Carl Orlf (1895) owes nothing to his influence, nor yet to that of Schoen-

berg. His Carmina burana and the Catulli carmina seem to belong to another epoch. More like incantations than formally constructed musical compositions, these works are made up, intentionally, of the simplest elements—popular tunes, intoned recitatives, ostinati and accumulations of common chords in the midst of which the few rare dissonances stand out with extraordinary prominence. His art is limited, but powerful.

To the same generation belong Kurt

Benjamin Britten.

Weill and Ernst Krenek, both born in 1900. The first is best known for his Dreigroschenoper (1928), a modernized version of the Beggar's Opera by John Gay and Pepusch. The success of these haunting tunes is due to their perfect appropriateness to that sordid epoch rather than intrinsic musical value. As for Ernst Krenek, an Austrian by birth who made his career in Germany, he achieved sudden fame with a work of a topical character (at that time, 1926) Jonny spielt auf, an opera-bouffe in the syncopated style inspired by the recent invasion of jazz. Later, in his opera Karl V, and in several instrumental works, he adopted the Viennese twelvenote system.

### Italian revival

In Italy the movement in favour of non-dramatic musical forms inaugurated, while the cult of 'verismo' was still at its height, by Giovanni Sgambati (1843-1914), Martucci and their disciples, gained ground rapidly at the beginning of the present century. Without renouncing the theatre, altogether, composers showed a renewed interest in the symphony, the oratorio and chamber music, a state of affairs which was to have a beneficial effect on operatic music which, having itself been renovated, was continuing in the tradition of the best works of Puccini, rejecting the too facile pathos and rudimentary craftmanship of Mascagni and Leoncavallo.

Those chiefly responsible for this revival were Ottorino Respighi (1879-1937), a pupil of Max Bruch and Rimsky-Korsakov, author of several more than estimable operas, but better known for his symphonic poems The Pines of Rome and The Fountains of Rome; Ildebrando Pizzetti (1880), more refined and sensitive, and also more modern although his vocal music derives much of its character from his use of ancient modes; and Gian-Francesco Malipiero (1882), a native of Venice embodying all the





Raoul Dufy: Hommage à Mozart. 18" $\times 21^{3/4}$ ". 1951. P. Courthion collection, Paris.

fantasy, profusion of ideas, dramatic intensity and spontaneity of the musicians, painters and poets of the Republic in its halcyon days. He has written a lot, and many of his works are well known outside Italy, e.g. the Sette Canzoni, an opera in the form of a suite of seven tableaux corresponding to the same number of songs; the Tre Commedie Goldoniane (of which the best known is Le Baruffe Chiozotte); the symphonic poems Impressioni del vero, Pause del silenzio, and Rispetti e Strambotti, short pieces for string quartet based on old popular songs. There was also Alfredo

Casella (1883-1947), a brilliant pianist whose reputation as a virtuoso and theoretician and the skill with which he openly imitated his contemporaries perhaps had an adverse effect on his development as a composer. Yet, although he was affected by contradictory influences, especially between 1920 and 1930, he produced a certain number of works which owe their distinctive character to the fact that they represent a return to the spirit of pre-classical Italian music, with its nervous rhythms and tunefulness, though the harmonies are extremely modern.

The generation born round 1900 is rich in talents of which, for the reasons given above, I cannot attempt to give even a summary account; if I mention the names of Vittorio Rieti, F. G. Ghedini, Goffredo Petrassi, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Virgilio Mortari, Luigi Cortese, I am conscious of doing them less than justice; and this applies in a still greater degree to those whom I have not been able to mention. I must, however, say something, if only a few words, about the singular position occupied in European music today by Luigi Dallapiccola (1904) who has succeeded

in "latinizing" the twelve-note system. Except for a few pages in which he seems to have set himself the task of rivalling in austerity his Austrian models, he endows the 'series' with a melodic character which, though doubtless far removed from the traditional Italian melos, yet allows for the expression of some 'Mediterranean' lyrical feeling. The Tre Laudi, the Liriche greche, but above all the opera Volo di Notte (after Saint-Exupery's Vol de Nuit), the Canti di Prigionia and the opera Il Prigioniero

sciously national Spanish music. Musicians in many parts of Europe were at that time turning their attention to popular sources in order to draw from them fresh vitality, either by horrowing themes directly, as Grieg and other Nordic composers did, or else by absorbing their melodic spirit and characteristic rhythms and harmonies until they were able to express themselves in what has very felicitously been described as the language of "imaginary folk-lore". This is what happened in the case of Bartók,

pretations. While living in Paris from 1907 to 1914 Falla got to know Debussy, and learned from him to renounce academicism and to acquire a technique that would be fully adequate to express his musical ideas. Nights in the gardens of Spain, for piano and orchestra, the Seven popular Songs (a most accomplished example of "imaginary folklore"), the ballet Amor brujo, the Threecornered hat, Master Peter's puppet show, and the Harpsichord Concerto are all stages in an uninterrupted ascent







From l. to r. three musical pioneers: Luigi Dallapiccola, Italian atonal composer; Edgar Varèse who first experimented with "concrete music" in the United States; Carlos Chávez, composer and conductor who has led the modern musical movement in Mexico.

all convey the impression of a relaxed tonality rather than of an assault against tonality, even in passages where Schoenbergian principles are rigidly observed. The beauty of the vocal writing and the dramatic power of the last three works have won for them recognition outside those circles given over to the cult of serial music.

### Spain : Albeniz, Manuel de Falla

Up to the Renaissance Spain had been counted among the great musical nations. Since then she had fallen a victim to Italianate influences in the midst of which the writers of zarzuelas and a few instrumental composers like Cabanilles or Padre Antonio Soler stood out in isolation. Luckily Spain had preserved intact a rich and immensely varied inheritance of folk music, part of which was constituted in the Middle Ages under Byzantine and Moorish influences. The composer and musicologist Felipe Pedrell (1841-1922) was the first to assess its true value and to attempt to extract from it the elements of a new and con-

Janácek and the Spanish pupils or rivals of Pedrell. Amongst the latter Isaac Albeniz (1860-1909) was one of the first to compose typically Spanish music, at the same time identifying himself with the modern movement inaugurated by the young French school. Already famous as a pianist, he came to Paris to study with Dukas and Vincent d'Indy, and also to derive inspiration from Debussy and Ravel. The dozen or so pieces contained in Iberia, in which the piano is endowed with an almost symphonic amplitude and wealth of colour, have made his name immortal, just as the Goyescas and Spanish Dances have kept alive the memory of Enrique Granados (1867-1916).

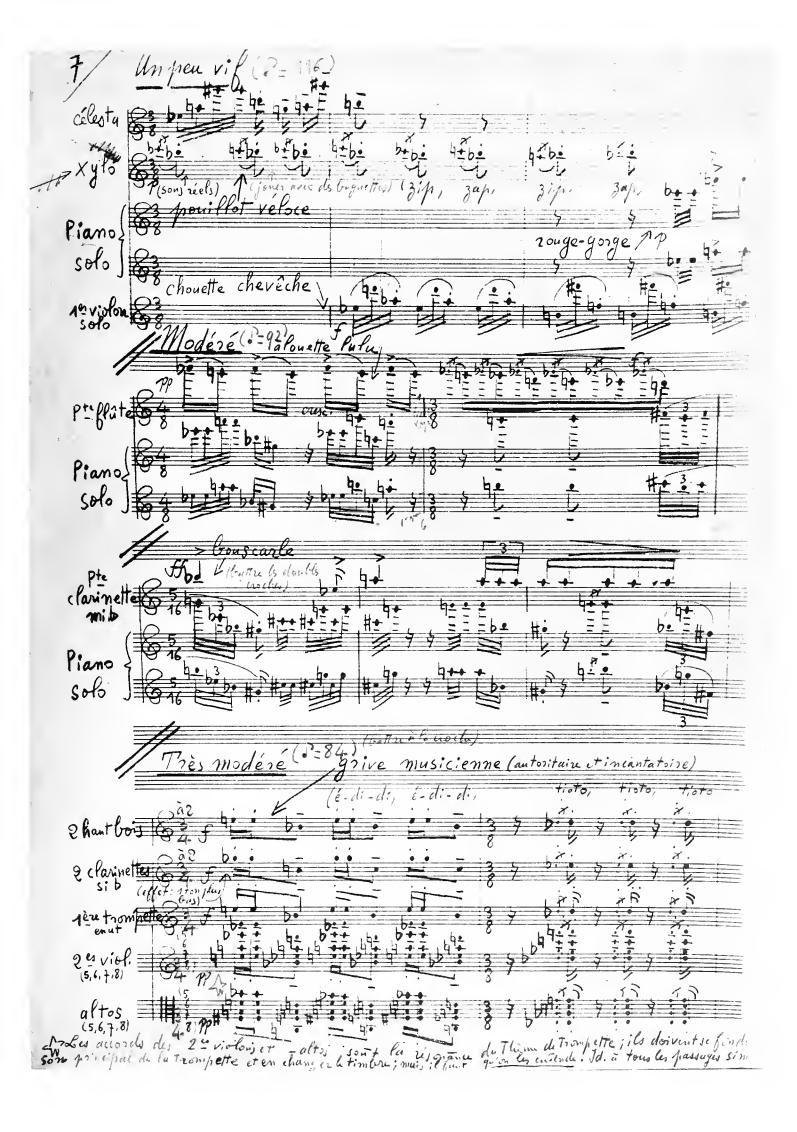
In Manuel de Falla (1876-1946), their junior by a few years, Spain was to possess a master musician of a very different calibre. He wrote little, but nothing that was not of the first quality. The work with which he made his debut, the lyric drama La Vida breve (1905), revealed a powerful dramatic temperament and an innate sense of orchestration coupled with a lyrical sensibility derived from cante hondo, that ancient form of popular song whose nobility is so often travestied by music-hall inter-

towards an ever more simplified and more universal form of expression, although the influence of Spain can always be felt. It is also noticeable in the works of Joaquin Turina (1881), Ernesto Halffter, Joaquin Rodrigo, and Oscar Esplá (1889), although this very great musician, relatively unknown, did try to emancipate Iberian music from the folk-lore influence. I cannot end this already very incomplete list without at least mentioning the name of Federico Mompou (1895), a miniaturist whose little pieces for the piano, Cants magics, Suburbis and Scènes d'enfants have an extraordinary evocative power in spite of their concision and the transparency of their texture.

### Modern English music

In England, after the splendid Elizabethan epoch and a less brilliant seventeenth century which, however, was

Olivier Messiaen: page of the orchestral score for Le Réveil des Oiseaux, 1953, using the songs and calls of birds. Various bird names are inscribed in the score.



redeemed by Purcell, musical production was considerably impoverished unless we take into account the enormously important contribution of Handel and the Italians Ariosti, Bononcini, Geminiani, etc. The importance of the Beggars' Opera by Gay and Pepusch lay, as we

three it was Elgar who was the most celebrated in his own country. In retrospect, his best works—the oratorio *The Dream of Gerontius*, the symphonic study *Falstaff* and the *Enigma Variations* for orchestra (of which each variation is a portrait of a friend of the composer's)—

series of nine) and the ballet Job. I will not attempt a mere enumeration of the very numerous English masters worthy of a place beside Vaughan Williams, but will make an exception for Constant Lambert (1905-1951), composer, conductor and critic (his book



Duke Ellington—a force in Jazz.

have seen, in its destructive force. Composers like Arne, Avison, Boyce, William Croft and Festing achieved a local reputation, but made no noticeable contribution to European music. The national revival dates from the end of the last century. Until then both opera and instrumental music were still under the influence of Italian opera or of the German Romantics, especially Mendels-sohn and Weber. The only notable exceptions were John Field (1782-1837), the creator of the Nocturne for the piano which was to be developed later by Chopin and Fauré and, in a more frivolous sphere, Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900), the successful writer of operettas whose originality has already been noted above.

It was with Sir Charles V. Stanford (1852-1924), Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934) and Frederick Delius (1863-1934) that England again took her place in the sphere of creative music. Of the

appear to us to be academic rather than inspired. Gustav Holst (1874-1934) reveals in *The Planets* and other symphonic poems much greater originality and sensibility, together with an impressive mastery of orchestration.

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1959) surpassed all the musicians of his generation and the next, although both were rich in composers of talent. His production shows a diversity, an abundance and, at times, a boldness that remained with him to the end. Without any pedantic archaism he revived the spirit of the Renaissance motet, but at the same time he belonged to his own epoch, and the scarcely restrained violence of the Fourth Symphony is not far removed in spirit from German post-Romanticism. Among his most representative works I would mention the ballad-opera Hugh the Drover, the Fantasia on a theme of Tallis for string orchestra (1910), the London Symphony (the second of a

Music Ho! is as stimulating as it is paradoxical); Michael Tippett (1905), a skilled contrapuntist and author of some excellent chamber music works; and finally Frank Bridge (1879-1941) and John Ireland (1879) who, apart from their own creative work, had the honour of teaching the leader of the young contemporary English school, Benjamin Britten.

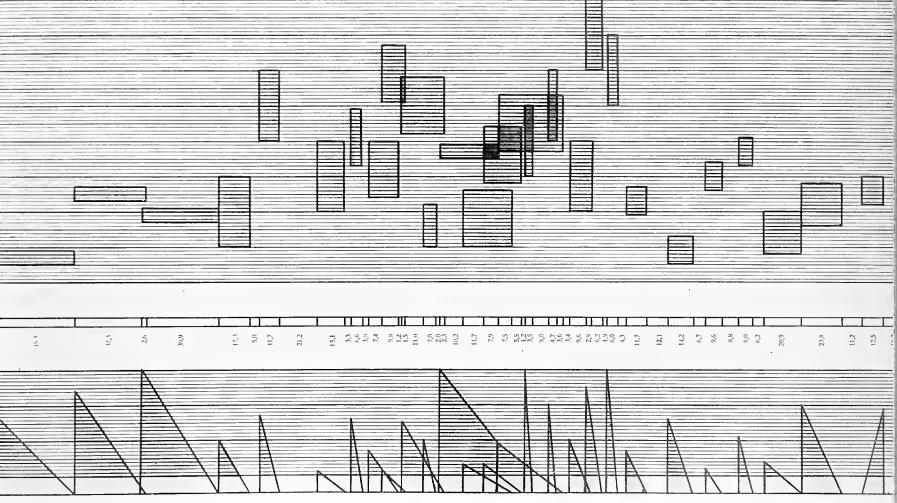
Born in 1913, Britten had, at the age of ten, already composed some piano pieces that merit attention, and soon afterwards the Simple Symphony confirmed these precoeious gifts. Britten has written much since then, in almost every branch, and his inspiration has rarely failed him. His predilection for vocal music naturally inclined him towards opera, and in this sphere he has been equally successful with drama

Nicolas de Staël: Sydney Bechet. 64"×45", 1952.



(Peter Grimes) and opera-bouffe (Albert Herring). In The Rape of Lucretia he achieved some ingenious and novel effects with a small orchestra of solo instrumentalists. He is sometimes accused of eclecticism, a reproach often directed by less fortunate musicians

merits as a composer have been, as often happens, overshadowed by his fame as a virtuoso, was a musician of the same quality, one of the last exponents of that effusive and somewhat declamatory style that marked the decline of the romantic era. Greater discipline is to be (1907). Pijper, who has written almost every kind of music, including opera, is best known for his symphonies and chamber music, his technique being advanced, but resting on solid foundations. His rhythms are particularly interesting. Henk Badings has adopted



Karlheinz Stockhausen: Etude II. This page by the young German composer comes from the first published score of electronic music. (Universal Edition, London 1956.) It was performed in 1944 at the Cologne radio "Studio for electronic music".

against those of their contemporaries who have tasted success; in any case it loses much of its sting when we think of the eclecticism of Bach, Handel, Mozart and especially Stravinsky, the only living composer who is taboo.

# Belgium, Holland, Switzerland

In Belgium Peter Benoît (1834-1901) and Jan Blockx (1851-1912) did much to revive a solid and colourful Flemish school. Antwerp, which is its head-quarters, was evidently prone to Germanic influences which, moreover, can be traced, though in an attenuated form, in the disciples of the Walloon master, César Franck. I have already cited the most gifted of these, Guillaume Lekeu who died in early youth. Eugene Ysaye (1858-1931) the illustrious violinist whose

found in the works of the composers, who were at the same time great teachers and theoreticians, who succeeded one another as Directors of the Brussels Conservatoire—Gevaert, Edgar Tinel, Joseph Jongen. The music of Marcel Poot (1901) the present Director, has the typical Flemish qualities of exuberance and robustness. Of the same generation, Jean Absil (1893) somewhat resembles Ravel in the subtlety of his style, while Raymond Chevreuille (1909), an autodidact whose youthful audacities could have been attributed to inexperience, has given proof, on reaching maturity, of genuine originality.

Few Dutch composers in our time have achieved universal fame. From time to time one can hear on the radio or at international festivals the works of Diepenbrock, Wagenaar, Scm Dresden, Alexander Voormolen, Marius Monikendam and a few others. The only composers we are familiar with are William Pijper (1894-1947) and Henk Badings

the atonalism of the Viennese school, but has not, it would seem, allowed himself to become its slave.

Switzerland is characterized, musically, by the same duality as Belgium, the German-speaking cantons being attached to the traditions and techniques of Germany, while French Switzerland leans more towards the Latin countries. But, like everywhere else in the world, as a result of an expansion in the volume of exchanges due to the ever-increasing mobility of performers and orehestras, the multiplication of Festivals and above all the radio and gramophone, these divergencies are becoming less and less apparent every day. The composers who owe most to Germanic influences are Hans Huber (1852-1921), symphonist and composer of some excellent chamber music, Othmar Schoek (1886) who has written mainly operas and songs, and Willi Burckhardt (1900) whose best known work is his oratorio The Book of Isaiah. These influences can also be seen

in the early works of Conrad Beck (1901). Curiously enough it was while he was working in France with Tibor Harsanyi (Hungarian), Bohuslav Martinu (Czech) and Marcel Mihailovici (Rumanian) as a member of the "Ecole de Paris", that Beck became a faithful disciple of Hindemith who was then in the midst of his most 'inhuman' contrapuntal period. On returning to his own country he gradually freed himself from these restrictions and allowed himself to come under Latin influences to which he was temperamentally attuned. Honegger would find his place here were it not that France has annexed him, by universal consent, as she did in the case of Lully.

In French-speaking Switzerland Ernest Bloch (1880-1959) has more affinities with German romanticism than with Debussy and Ravel. His vehement and highly coloured music is often based on Jewish themes; e.g. the rhapsodies Nigun for violin, Schelomo for 'cello and orchestra and the symphony Israel, etc. On the other hand, Gustave Doret (1866-1943), Emile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950) and many composers of the present generation are Frenchspeaking although they have been mainly concerned with reviving the genuine folk-lore of "La Suisse romande".

It is less easy to define the musical personality of Frank Martin (1890), the most original composer of his generation, and also one of the most independent. He is one of those who have explored most thoroughly the resources of the twelve-note system in order to fortify their technique without adopting it as a rigid dogma. His most important works are the big cantatas Le Vin herbé and Golgotha, the Symphonic concertante and the concertos for violin and for harpsichord.

# Hungary : Bartók, Kodály

The musical life of Hungary, from the Middle Ages to the end of the Renaissance had been a brilliant one, with its Court minstrels and itinerant musicians singing epic sagas whose success was due far more to the beauty of the melodies than to the actual words; these in turn were succeeded, in the sixteenth century, by virtuosi on the cimbalom or lute. Ever since the preclassical period 'cultured' music had been derived from Italian, German or French sources (the operas of Franz Erkel have their roots in cosmopolitan "grand opera" and the works of Mosonvi in German romanticism). At the same time great interest was taken in gypsy music, the art of the Zigeuner or Tziganes, which led to some confusion between their music, with its primitive rhythms and scales and that of the Hungarian peasantry.

Though the resurrection of Hungarian music may not be the direct result of the rediscovery of this folk-lore, it does coincide closely with it, and after making a somewhat indecisive start with Ernö Dohnányi (1877), the revival was continued methodically and most tenaciously by Bartók, Kodály and their followers.

Bartók and Kodály are often bracketed together, no doubt because early in their careers they both bore the same modernist label and because they began together, inspired by the same patriotic ardour and strictly scientific approach, to explore the rich store-house of their national music. But for Bartók this was only a means of developing a musical personality which was already outstanding with the result that he became, as time went on, one of the greatest

composers of our age.

Born in 1881 Béla Bartók from the first exhibited, both in his art and in his general conduct, magnificent courage and independence. I cannot here do more than merely mention the difficulties he created for himself through his militant attitude with regard to his country's independence and, later on, his refusal to commercialize his art. He died in New York in 1945 after enduring for many years ill health and poverty. As everyone knows, no sooner was he dead than he was able to take his revenge, aided by a beneficial snobbish reaction; for the public now applauds with equal enthusiasm works which are relatively accessible, such as the Allegro barbaro, the Divertimento for strings, the Concerto for Orchestra, and others, like the Quartets, the Sonatas and parts of the Mikrokosmos which cannot be more than superficially appreciated without a minimum of initiation.

Bartók came under the liberating influence of Debussy whom he admired. He also appreciated the importance of Stravinsky and Schoenberg whose innovations he took advantage of, though without any suggestion of slavish imitation. But above all he learned a lot from his studies of folk-lore, carried out not only in Hungary and in the Balkans, but as far away as Algeria from which he derived much of his rhythmic science, melodic scale construction and corre-

sponding harmonic system.

Of his works, all of which are worthy of mention, the most outstanding are probably Music for strings, percussion and celesta (1936) the six quartets, the second Piano Concerto and the Violin Concerto; the Dance Suite for orchestra (1923); the pantomime The Miraculous Mandarin; and, for voices, the 3 Village Scenes (1926), 20 Hungarian Folk Songs (1929) and the Cantata Profana (1930). Most of the above exhibit, in addition to consummate craftsmanship, lyrical fervour and at times a note of personal confession, as it were, reminding one of the last Beethoven quartets.

The modernism of Zoltán Kodály (1882) is much less extreme. His incidental music to Hary Janos, his Marosszek Dances and Dances of Galanta and the Psalmus Hungaricus (1923) which is considered his masterpiece, are remarkable for their melodic wealth, seductive harmonies, partly derived from popular music and owing something to Debussy, and brilliant and ingenious orchestra-

# Czechoslovakia, Scandinavia, Poland, The Balkans

Czechoslovakia is the heir to an important musical heritage handed down by its two component parts, Bohemia and Moravia, whence sprang those composers whose names we have already had occasion to mention—Biber in the seventeenth century, the Stamitz family in the eighteenth and in the nineteenth Reicha, one of those from whom Berlioz received instruction. The Czechs attach the greatest importance to Bedrich Smetana (1824-1884), the composer of The Bartered Bride, an opéra-comique in which village customs and morality are vividly portrayed; six symphonic poems, including the celebrated Moldau; and two string quartets one of which, entitled From my Life, depicts the tragedy of the deafness which, when Smetana was thirty, put an end to his promising career as a conductor. The veneration with which he is regarded by his compatriots is due to the use which he made of Czech popular songs at a time when these songs fomented their patriotism during their struggle against Austrian domination. It should be observed, however, that Smetana treated these national themes in a style derived from Liszt and Wagner, without troubling to find in them the elements of an original musical language as Bartók, Falla or Janácek were to do later in their respective countries.

Similarly Antonin Dvorák (1841-1904) used Czech material in a style that recalls Brahms, although this in no way detracts from the success of his lively Slavonic Dances or of his nine symphonies, especially the one known as From the New World (1893) which today is most frequently recorded and performed -or, again, his abundant chamber music. But the most strikingly original personality is that of Leos Janácek (1854-1928). Practically self-taught, he forged for himself a rational technique based on his analysis of popular song and the spoken word, and on his conception of harmony, counterpoint and the orchestra untainted by any suspicion of scholasticism. His Sinfonietta, his operas are beginning to be known outside Central Europe. His most impressive works are the song-cycle The Diary of One Who Vanished and the Glagolitic Mass completed the year he died.

Of the generations that succeeded him Viteslav Novák, Foerster, Vycpálek among others and, more recently, Bohuslav Martinu (1890-1959), Jirák (1891), Alois Haba (1893) and Karel Husa have continued to enrich the patrimony of Czechoslovakia.

The Scandinavian countries had a tradition of epic poetry, dating from the early Middle Ages, with which music was closely associated. An important place was assigned to instruments as is evident from the numerous allusions in Scandinavian legend to the magic properties possessed by the zither and the harp. Yet, apart from Buxtehude in the seventeenth century, the more 'learned' forms of music developed very late and only brought to light a small number of original composers. One of the first was the Swede Johann Helmich Roman (1694-1758), an oboist and violin virtuoso, as well as a fertile composer. Technically, he followed very closely German and Italian models, but his melodic invention justifies the revival of his symphonies, concertos and chamber music. I have mentioned above the symphonies of his compatriot Agrell who, as early as 1725 employed, though without showing any signs of genius, an almost classical style of orchestration. Franz Berwald (1796-1868), though for a long time neglected in his own country, was much more of an innovator, both as regards substance and form. The newly awakened interest in his symphonies seems to be fully justified. Among composers of talent in Sweden of more recent date some, like Wilhelm Stenhammar (1871-1927), oscillate between a Nordic style and one modelled on Beethoven or Brahms, while others, like Emil Sjogren (1853-1918), reflect the influence of Grieg. Among the moderns, Kurt Atterberg (1887), Ture Rangström (1884-1947), Gästa Nystrom (1890) Dag Wiren (1905) and Gunnar de Frumerie (1908) have produced interesting work.

Norway had one composer whose greatness rests, not on the bulk or sensationalism of his output, but on the poetic sensibility with which all his works are pervaded: Edvard Grieg (1843-1907). While his construction and developments are weak, a few of his larger works, such as the Piano Concerto have survived by reason of their melodic charm and clear-cut rhythms. The shorter pieces, on the other hand, where there is a minimum of development, like the incidental music to Peer Gynt (1876), the Norwegian Dances (1881), the songs and especially the Lyrical Pieces for piano (1867-1901) are once again, after going through a period when it was the fashion to disparage them, arousing the admiration which their freshness, melodic

flavour tinged with folk-lore and skilfully blended harmonies had earned for them in the eyes of Debussy and Ravel and, more recently, Gieseking. Christian Sinding and Johann Svendsen continued in the same tradition.

In Niels W. Gade (1817-1890) Denmark, where J. A. P. Schultz had created in the eighteenth century a national opera on the model of the German Singspiel, possessed a composer who for a time enjoyed a European reputation. As a pupil of Mendelssohn and his deputy with the Leipzig orchestra he had, however, merely been an elegant reflection of his master, and his abundant output has practically disappeared from the repertory. That of Carl Nielsen (1865-1931), scarcely less abundant, is much more interesting. Using modal harmonies derived from very ancient music he developed a style which at times resembles that of Hindemith, at others that of the contemporary French school. The most remarkable among his successors are Ebbe Hammerik, Finn Höffding and especially Knudaage Riisager, the friend and valued disciple of Albert Roussel.

The modern Finnish school starts with Jan Sibelius (1865-1957), one of the most admired and one of the most controversial composers of our time. His symphonic poems, his Violin Concerto, his seven symphonies are very highly rated in his own country and in Anglo-Saxon circles. Elsewhere he is credited with an evocative quality which invests his finest symphonic poems Finlandia, The Swan of Tuonela and The Return of Lemminkainen with a poetic charm that prevails in spite of a certain monotony. Sibelius did not write, or at any rate publish anything after 1925. Armas Launis, Yrjoe Kilpinen, Bengt de Torne are among the most interesting Finnish composers today.

In Poland the immortal fame of Chopin has overshadowed that of Stanislav Moniuszko (1819-1872) who was looked upon by his contemporaries as their national musician; in point of fact his operas were strongly influenced by the cosmopolitan 'Grand Opera' style, although a recording of one of these is by no means devoid of interest. More recently, Karol Szymanowski (1883-1937) succeeded in combining Polish themes and rhythms with a style of writing derived from the principal innovators of his day. Although at first it was to be feared that foreign influences, notably those of Strauss, Debussy, Stravinsky and Schoenberg, would encourage an unproductive eelecticism, the personality of Szymanowski was strong enough to assimilate them and to produce works, starting with Mythes op. 30 for violin and piano, of unmistakable originality; thus the Stabat Mater, the

ballet Harnasie, the second Violin Concerto, the Fourth Symphony and the piano pieces Etudes, Mazurkas, etc., are worthy of a place in succession to Chopin.

The modern Polish school is brilliantly represented by Alexandre Tansman (1897) who is resident in France, which has also been the home of Piotr Perkowski, Labunski, Stanislav Skrowaczewski (1920) and many pupils of Nadia Boulanger.

The greatest name in Rumanian music is without doubt that of Georges Enesco (1881-1955), whose fame as a violinist has tended to obscure his real merits as a composer. But his Rumanian Rhapsodies which he composed at the age of 17 reveal a precocious mastery which was later confirmed by his symphonies, his sonatas [the third of which is impregnated with Rumanian folk-lore] and his opera Oedipe which had its first performance at the Paris Opéra in 1936, but was hardly given a chance to establish itself. Filip Lazar (1894-1936), Nona Ottesco (1888-1940), Stan Golestan (1875) and, of the present generation, Marcel Mihailovici (1898) are among those who have enriched the musical patrimony of their country.

Those who have done the same for Greece are Petro Petridis (1892) and Emile Riadis who both, while in Paris, came under the influence of Debussy, Fauré and Ravel; Manolis Kalomiris, Levidis and Nikos Skalkottas (1904).

# French contemporary music

The reason why contemporary French music will be the least well represented in this chapter is simple: we can form a more or less clear idea of the situation in foreign countries because for each one of them the documentation at our disposal is limited. We cannot do this, however, where our own country is concerned. Here we are too near to what is going on, and the material is too abundant.

The least unsatisfactory solution, I feel, is to end my survey (apart from one or two incursions into the immediate present) around the years 1930-1940 which were marked by the deaths of Ravel, Roussel and Dukas and, as regards the generation that followed, to mention only those musicians who, by forming themselves into groups, are considered, rightly or wrongly, to represent a 'tendency' and on that account have already a place in History.

The most important of these groups was the "Six", who came into being in January 1920 through the chance remark of a music critic. Darius Milhaud has related, in his *Notes without music*, how after a concert given in the Salle

Huyghens, Henri Collet wrote an account of it in Comoedia under the title "The Five Russians and the Six Frenchmen": "Quite arbitrarily he had chosen six names: Auric, Durey, Honegger, Poulenc, Tailleferre and my own, merely because we knew one another, were good friends and had figured on the same programmes; quite irrespective of our different temperaments and wholly dissimilar characters. Auric and Poulenc were partisans of Cocteau's ideas, Honegger derived from the German Romantics, and I from Mediterranean lyricism... but it was useless to protest. Collet's article excited such worldwide interest that the 'Group of Six' was launched.'

It is open to question whether the ideas of Jean Cocteau have had any more influence on the development of Poulenc and Auric than the crowing of Chantecler had on the rising of the sun. The brilliant aphorisms (which like the Maxims of La Rochefoucauld can often be turned upside down without losing very much) he gathered together in Cock and Harlequin (1919) were the reflection of a desire that was prevalent at the time, and that had often been voiced by Satie, to react against the by-products of Wagnerism and Debussyism-rhetoric, longwindedness and unhealthy preciosity. This was accompanied by a summons to rally round the aesthetic banner of the music-hall and circus which had already been proclaimed by the writers and painters.

Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel (1921), a studio farce composed on a libretto by Cocteau by the 'Six' (who were already only five by that time, Durey having withdrawn), was a good illustration of the ideals proclaimed in the manifesto. After this the members of the group, though still bound by ties of friendship, very soon separated, each going his own way with varying degrees of success.

Louis Durey (1888) has remained in relative obscurity. He has confined himself for the most part to the smaller forms-chamber music, and songs set to words which indicate a refined eclecticism.

The career of Germaine Tailleferre (1892) has been equally little publicized since her music is of too delicate a nature to appeal to the masses. Her earliest songs revealed a sensibility akin to that of Fauré; the concertos, the Ballade, an entrancing symphonic Overture and the noble Cantate du Narcisse show a command of form and an original method of orchestration which owe nothing to the accepted tenets of the group.

In point of fact, the attention of the critics and musicologists has been practically monopolized by four members of the 'Six': Honegger, Milhaud, Poulenc and Auric.

Arthur Honegger, born at Le Havre in 1892 of Swiss parents, died in Paris in 1956, had always been the least accessible to the theories of Jean Cocteau. He had never concealed his distaste for fairground music, nor his predilection for music in the tradition of Beethoven and for the symphony "in its most abstract and serious form". He was nevertheless the opposite of an abstract musician. His output includes five symphonies, quartets and sonatas, but even these 'pure' forms reveal a definite gift for a suggestion and description. One has only to recall the symphonic poem Horace Victorieux, or the Symphonie liturgique in which the celestial common chords triumph almost too obviously over the infernal dissonances, or again the long and poignant cry of anguish in the last symphony (1951), known as Les trois ré; Pacific 231 and Rugby are programme music ennobled by a rigorous sense of form.

Nothing can give a more complete idea of Honegger than his dramatic works-Le Roi David which made him famous before he was thirty (1921), Judith (1925), Antigone (1927), Jeanne au bûcher (1935), La Danse des Morts (1938). They all reveal an impressive power, an ability to build on a large scale without however sacrificing detail, and a magnificently firm harmonic and contrapuntal style which can be bold when necessary for the sake of expression. His music is romantic in feeling, and classical in its respect for just pro-

portions and formal beauty.

Darius Milhaud, born at Aix-en-Provence in 1892 (the same year as Honegger) has described himself as "a Frenchman from Provence and a Jew by religion". Perhaps this explains to some extent the nature of his vast output (some 400 works of every description), its variety and also its inequalities, the latter due to the fact that he is in the habit of publishing, without discrimination, not only his most carefully thought out and 'finished' compositions, but also mere hastily executed sketches which sometimes give the impression of being laboratory experiments. He did, in fact, do a lot of experimental work, especially early in his career, in the sphere of polytonality, and with such ardour as to suggest that he was being deliberately aggressive. It was not long, however, before his true personality asserted itself. It is a many-sided one, with two predominant features which corroborate the description of himself quoted above: on the one hand a lyrical quality with a luminous, Mediterranean flavour and plenty of melodic invention expressing itself clearly in the language of tonality with clear-cut rhythms and straightforward orchestration (the operabouffe Esther de Carpentras and the exquisite Scaramouche suite for two pianos are perfect examples of this); and on the other a different and more severe kind of lyrical inspiration as exemplified in the Poèmes juifs, which can rise to

tragic heights as in the music of the trilogy L'Orestie where polytonality, a rhythmic obsession conveyed by means of a vast battery of percussion instruments and a systematic use of all the darkest timbres in the orchestra intensify the impact of the grim Aeschylean tragedy. It is clearly impossible for me to supply even a brief catalogue of a production in which every branch of music is abundantly represented. To the already mentioned, however, can be added as particularly characteristic in the sphere of dramatic music Les Malheurs d'Orphée, the three 'Opéra-Minutes' of 1927, the three big South-American operas: Christophe Colomb, Maximilien and Bolivar, and the ballet La Création du Monde whose orchestration is perhaps the most effective and the most original of any that has been inspired by jazz.

Francis Poulenc and Georges Auric were both born in 1899, in Paris and

Lodève respectively.

Poulenc's career has been a singular one in many respects. From the very beginning he was admitted on the same footing as Honegger and Milhaud although he was then writing music infinitely simpler than theirs, both as regards harmony and general approach. His themes evoked shades of Clementi as well as of Gounod. They were spiced with a few subversive chords to show his solidarity with the group and to satisfy a juvenile desire to shock. But even his most frivolous pages revealed an authentic melodic gift. Even in his pastiches Poulenc was as easily identifiable as Brahms or Fauré.

In addition, he had a most remarkable instinct for piano writing and vocal declamation: the Mouvements perpétuels, composed in 1918 at the age of 19, and the Bestiaire, written the following year, would have done credit to an experienced composer. Meanwhile, under the mask of a dilettantism which deceived the public for a long time, he was working hard to perfect his art; thus the Concert champêtre for harpsichord, the Stabat Mater, the a cappella Mass of 1937, the song-cycle Tel jour, telle nuit and his most recent dramatic works, the Dialogues des Carmélites and La Voix humaine, are all highly accomplished and mature works. Another, and not the least of Poulenc's singularities, is the parallelism constantly maintained between a sincere religious and mystical inspiration and the popular, sarcastic and, on occasion, licentious vein manifested in the Chansons Gaillardes, the Mamelles de Tirésias or the Piano Concerto of 1949.

Georges Auric, who is often bracketed with Poulenc as Honegger was with Milhaud did, in fact, resemble him for a time, although his playfulness was in reality more sardonic and his humour more acid. As a boy of thirteen his precocious gifts had astonished Albert

Roussel. As early as 1914 he had already published a set of songs, Interludes, remarkable for their sobriety, intelligent choice of texts and incisive style. Four years later his setting of Huit Poèmes by Jean Cocteau were a perfect example of his early manner. His best known works are the incidental music, later turned into a ballet, for Molière's Les Fâcheux, and the ballet Les Matelots remarkable for its terse and vigorous style and deliberately dry harmonies. With the Sonata in F for the piano (1931) Auric began to allow free rein to a sensibility hitherto only occasionally glimpsed under a mask of irony. In his music for the ballet Phèdre (1950) he showed at last what he was capable of in the way of grandeur, vigour and dramatic intensity of feeling.

The Ecole d'Arcueil—the name given to a group of young composers who rallied round Erik Satie during the last years of his life-never achieved anything like the notoriety of the group "Les Six". It consisted of Henri Cliquet-Pleyel (1894) and Maxime Jacob (1906) (whom, in view of the scale of this book, I must content myself with merely mentioning); Roger Desormière (1898) who has written little but, up to the time when he was struck down by illness, had served the cause of contemporary music with equal intelligence, energy and talent; and finally Henri Sauguet (1901), the only one of the four who has had an international career.

A pupil of Canteloube and Keechlin, he at first showed himself to be an instinctive musician with a pleasing gift of melody whose poetic sensibility made up for deficiencies in a technique which he was late in acquiring. During this early part of his career he wrote mainly songs, before turning to the theatre where he made his début with two amusing and grotesque operas-bouffe, Le Plumet du Colonel (1924) and La Contrebasse (1930), and the ballet La Chatte (1927) which was followed by several others, of which Les Forains is one of the mainstays of the contemporary repertoire. Sauguet has continued to broaden his outlook and has composed a grand opera, La Chartreuse de Parme, symphonies and chamber music. In his Concerto d'Orphée for violin and orchestra he has employed bold harmonies, but his greatest originality lies in the way in which he is able, working within a tonal system, to endow familiar chords with a fresh aspect thanks to the ingenious way in which they are linked together.

The group of La Jeune France, founded in 1936 on the initiative of Yves Baudrier (1906), comprises, in addition to its founder, Olivier Messiaen (1908), André Jolivet (1905) and Daniel Lesur (1908). At first, like the Six or the Ecole d'Arcueil, it had no fixed programme. In the words of the foundation manifesto, it was a friendly

group which aimed at "disseminating young and emancipated works as free from any revolutionary as from any academic dogma".

It revealed certain tendencies which were common to Messiaen and Jolivet, but much less apparent in the case of Daniel Lesur and Yves Baudrier. The last-named, who has published little and, although originally the group's theoretician, seems to be content to remain too discreetly in the background, sees in music a means whereby man can express what lies deepest in his thoughts and consciousness.

The attitude of Daniel Lesur towards his art is somewhat similar to that of Poulenc, however much their styles and personalities may differ: no pre-conceived system, no obligation to follow or exclude any principles, no philosopical arrière-pensée. Daniel Lesur is possessed of a technique that enables him to use freely either couterpoint or vertical harmony, or derive inspiration from the ancient modes (cf. Suite médiévale), or make a discreet use of polytonality, or to switch from a large-scale symphonic work such as the overture Andrea del Sarto to the delicate exoticism of the Chansons cambodgiennes while remaining faithful to his ideals of clarity and equilibrium.

André Jolivet is more ambitious. He wishes "to restore to music its original antique character when its magic and incantatory powers were used as a means of mass expression. This is the meaning of works like Mana, a set of pieces for the piano, the Cinq Incantations for flute, the Cing danses rituelles, the Danse incantatoire for orchestra, etc. These preoccupations have led the composer to pursue his researches to great lengths in order to renew modes of expression, harmony, rhythm and orchestration, following largely in the footsteps of Edgar Varèse.

Jolivet does not however confine himself to this incantatory style of music. He has written concertos for various instruments which are essentially studies in sonorities; but in the Piano Concerto he has attempted, in addition, to bring about a compromise between our Western music and certain elements, both rhythmic and instrumental, borrowed from the music of Africa, the Far East and Polynesia. He has also composed vocal works of much greater simplicity, notably the Complaintes du Soldat remarkable for their direct and human appeal.

Of the four members of La Jeune France, Olivier Messiaen is the one of whom it is most difficult to give a summary account. Both as a man and as a composer he is equally complex and in a constant state of evolution; and when he tries to explain himself in his writings, Messiaen, who has no equal when it comes to dissecting and analysing a musical work, becomes the most verbose and confusing of commentators.

As a musician he was remarkably precocious. He went through the whole course of studies at the Paris Conservatoire with the greatest of ease as is shown by the prizes he carried off in every class in which he studied. When he was in his twentieth year he wrote for orchestra Les Offrandes oubliées (1930) and some organ pieces, one of which, at least, L'Apparition de l'Eglise éternelle (1932), has lost none of its grandeur or its novelty. Since then he has produced a number of works in so many different forms and bound together by such subtle links that the bare enumeration to which I would have to confine myself here would be completely devoid of interest. All that one can do is to try to distinguish certain general characteristics. Messiaen himself has given us some assistance here. "What I seek is music shot with iridescent colours whose voluptuous refinements will give pleasure to the ear (elsewhere he states that music should be "voluptuous but not, of course, sensual!"-somewhat difficult of achievement, perhaps). At the same time this music must be able to express noble sentiments, and especially the most noble of all, religious sentiments." (Technique de mon langage musical, 1944.)

In his work can be seen the coexistence, often contradictory, of a spontaneous melodic inspiration that still bears witness to the composer's youthful predilection for opera, especially operas by Massenet, and a passionate seeking after new means of expression derived from the most varied sources-borrowings from contemporary composers, reversion to ancient modes, the study of Hindu rhythms, exotic orchestras, bird-song, etc... How this contradiction has been in several cases successfully resolved has been well described by Roland-Manuel à propos the second of the Trois petites liturgies de la présence divine: "Messiaen here reveals the secret of his real power which his preference for bad literature and picturesque mysticism is powerless to destroy; and the secret is that of a musician who is a born melodist, and who knows instinctively and by experience that rhythm and tonality are bound together by the strongest ties and that the basis of harmony is consonance, but who is guided by his car-an ear of unparalleled acuity, an acoustician's ear-in the art of scizing and fixing harmonic 'partials' and directing them towards their poles of attraction.'

Since this was written in 1945, Messiaen has pursued much further his experiments with rhythm and acousties. It would seem, even, that he is being unconsciously involved in a movement that threatens the very foundations of Western music.

# Where the author refrains from prophesy

The promoters of this movement, from all over the world, although they may have different aims and start from different premisses, have one thing in common, and that is the idea of a progress indissolubly linked with the modernization of methods of writing and of the actual substance of music, such progress being always in the direction of ever increasing complexity. Thus M. André Hodeir (in La musique étrangère contemporaine) does not hesitate to speak of Bartók's "final decadence, similar to that of Schoenberg, Berg and Stravinsky", merely because at the end of his life he wrote some works more easy to assimilate than those which had preceded them. This attitude results in a state of affairs similar to that prevailing in the other arts where everyone is trying to go one better than his neighbour: the epigones devoid of talent strive desperately to attract notice without being able to conceal their incapacity for long, but the genuine creative artists are perturbed, and many of them lose much precious time before resuming their rightful course. These hesitations can be excused in view of the present confused situation, although Luigi Dallapiccola proclaimed in the Revue Internationale de Musique, 1938, that: "The musical movement is not, and never has been in a state of confusion. Or else it has always been in that state.' l doubt whether he would maintain today that this categoric statement still holds good.

In the first place the twelve-note system has branched out in several different directions in a way that is most confusing for the listener; on the one hand there are the composers who seek in it nothing but a means of technical display calculated to create in the hearer, by the use of entirely new methods, intellectual and sentimental reactions of the same order as those aroused by traditional music. Others, again, take an entirely different view and look upon it purely as a form of intellectual discipline. According to M. René Leibowitz one should not expect music to provide either pleasure, distraction or relaxation. What, then, should one expect to find in music? And does not this conception imply that music is inferior to mathematical or philosophical speculation which can reach out to infinity with the aid of a pencil and a piece of paper, whereas a musical word calls for performers having undergone a long training, as well as a public. But the bewilderment experienced by the public—and I mean the cultured public-is absolute: the

acceleration has been too rapid, and the amount of attention and knowledge expected from it is excessive. There is thus a risk of ending up with an esoteric art with all that that implies in the way of a threat to its vitality.

Apart from the dodecaphonic system, the hearer today is expected to be able to appreciate the most subtle refinements of rhythm and melody. When Messiaen, Jolivet and their disciples offer us examples of asymmetric rhythms or rhythms having a subtle kind of symmetry derived from the music of the Far East, or when Aloys Haba or Yvan Vichnegradsky employ intervals of a quarter or eighth of a tone or even less, we realize that we lack the age-old training of the Hindus who, in the absence of anything but the most rudimentary harmonic system (if such a thing exists at all) have concentrated all their efforts on the cultivation of rhythm and melody. Other and much more radical innovations have recently been introduced which complicate the situation still further: I refer to musique concrète and electronic music.

Leaving out of account (which we may well do) the noise machines ("bruiteurs") imagined in 1913 by the Futurists Marinetti and Russolo and seductively described as hululeurs, glouglouteurs, sibileurs, froufrouteurs, crépiteurs, etc..., the first experiments with musique concrète were probably those carried out since 1939 by John Cage with his percussion orchestras and "prepared pianos" to which reference has already been made above.

It was in 1948 that Pierre Schaeffer in Paris first introduced a system of composition based on the organization of musical and non-musical sounds, recorded and then blended and distorted by being speeded up or slowed down or played backwards, amplified or reduced, mixed up and manipulated in every possible way.

According to Pierre Schaeffer, "concrete expression in music consists in constructing objects in sound, not as hitherto with numbers and metronomic measurements, but with fragments of time snatched from the cosmos (these fragments being the grooves on the recording disks). What is extracted from time is a part of time and gives it form." In simpler terms, it is a system of composition and orchestration that uses these noises or "objects in sound" as its raw material; in actual practice, concrete music up to now has been most successfully employed as an auxiliary to pantomine, films or dancing rather than as a stylized system of organized noises.

Electronic music does not make use of noises or sounds recorded in advance, but of sounds emitted by electric frequency generators. By filtering the harmonics it is possible to alter the timbres and create new ones. Freed from the tyranny of scales with fixed intervals, intonation can be extremely flexible, and the most complicated rhythmic combinations that could not possibly be realized by any human agency can be superimposed.

The pioneers in this field round about 1950 were Meye-Eppler and Herbert Eimer of the West German Radio.

It is too early to say what these experiments will lead to in the future, but they have aroused great interest (especially electronic music) among avant-garde musicians in France—e.g. Pierre Boulez (1925)—and in Germany Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928) and their followers. It seems certain, however, that they will not lead to a simplification of the composer's art. Many critics see in the frenzied search for novelty with which the world of music is obsessed, with all its ruthlessness, instability and uncertainty, a reflection of our civilization as it is today.

But must this necessarily be music's

But must this necessarily be music's final destination? To limit its role to that of holding up a mirror to a restless and transitory epoch in time is surely to deprive it of its most precious attributes.

Mythology and ethnography both bear witness to the enormous power of music in primitive civilizations where it is a form of magic. Experiments carried out in modern times in prisoners' camps, where it reaches an uninitiated public, have shown that its influence is more powerful than that of any of the other arts, amusements or pastimes. Must we then deny it to the masses for whom it can do so much and who in return would allow it to live and extend its domain still further? Naturally there can be no question of expecting music to stand still or to turn back; nor must it be regulated so as to become a vehicle for political ideologies. Freedom is the primary condition of its existence. It is an excellent thing that searchers should interrogate the future and embark on a voyage of discovery, provided they have the requisite personality, absolute sincerity, technical competence and a thorough knowledge of music; provided, too, that they will not allow themselves to be hypnotized by purely technical problems; and provided, above all, that the technique adopted does not run counter to certain basic physical and psychological principles the importance of which may have been exaggerated, but which are inherent in human nature, and have always been respected by previous revolutionary movements from Ars Nova to Debussy, and have governed the creation of so many masterpieces that we should hesitate to do away with them until we have found other, and equally solid foundations on which to build.

## Notes

- 1. The other hymns of which he was known to be the author, Deus creator omnium, Jam surgit hora tertia, Veni redemptor gentium, are written in classical metres based on quantity, whereas the pseudo-Ambrosian chants adopt the new method of versification founded on the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables (a little later the difference between the two systems became more marked with the adoption of rhyme). Of the metre which St. Ambrose preferred, the lambic, the pseudo-Ambrosians later on preserved only the ternary rhythm, and their popularity was an important factor in ensuring the preponderance for a long time to come of this rhythm in mediaeval music, both sacred and profane.
- 2. Moreover, the spirit was as different as the vocabulary. The Greeks conceived of their scales as descending from high to low, whereas the ecclesiastical modes, like our modern scales, move in an upward direction; in addition, the characteristic notes in each mode, the tonic and dominant, do not occupy the same position in the two systems, nor do they have the same attributions.

There is, however, one point of resemblance: like the Greek modes based on the diatonic, those of the Church differed one from another according to the respective positions of the tones and semi-tones. The theoreticians enumerated eight modes (which were later supplemented by four more, the basic theory of which was expounded by Glarean in the sixteenth century. His ninth mode corresponded exactly to our C major scale). Of these eight modes, four are known as authentic, and the other four as plagal (from the Greek plagios meaning lateral, or complementary). As can be seen from the following table, the four authentic modes correspond to scales constructed on the notes D, E, F and G of our C major scale, with no sharps or flats. The plagal modes are arrived at by prolonging the authentic modes with which they are associated by a fourth in a downward direction, and taking away a fourth at the upper end.

1º Mode (Protus authentic)
2º Mode (Protus plagal)
3º Mode (Deuterus authentic)
4º Mode (Deuterus plagal)
5º Mode (Tritus authentic)
6º Mode (Tritus plagal)
7º Mode (Tetrardus authentic)
8º Mode (Tetrardus plagal)

It will be noticed that in the above table the various scales are situated in a low register, which suggests that only men's voices were employed at that time for Church singing. The total compass of the eight modes is 14 notes, to which later on a low G will be added; but this compass is never exploited to its full extent, for Gregorian chant moves within narrow limits, often less than a fifth and only rarely exceeding the octave (for example in the jubilant vocalises in Alleluias).

3. The theory of this system is based on the fact that it came to be noticed that in hexachords starting on ut and sol the semi-tone also falls in the middle, between the third and fourth notes. In the hexachord on fa the same thing occurs, provided the fourth degree is lowered by a semi-tone; this is the note si, which did not get its name until much later, towards the end of the sixteenth century, when it was formed out of the initials of Sancte Johannes. The hexachord on ut was known as the hexachordum naturale, that starting on sol as the hexachordum durum, because it included si natural (b durum in the ancient terminology), and that on fa as the hexachordum molle, on account of the si bemol, or b molle.

But the Gregorian themes could extend beyond the hexachord, and to enable this to be done, or in order to modulate by changing the pitch of one of the notes, a procedure called mutation, or *muance* was employed. For the purpose of

sol-fa it was agreed that every interval of a semi-tone would be indicated by mi-fa. Thus, in order to solmizate the series ut re mi fa sol la si ut, the sol was made the pivotal note and its name changed to ut as soon as it became the basis of the hexachord sol-mi:



Such was the principle whose application could well give rise to problems on which I do not dwell now. I will merely recall the opinion expressed by the learned Father Mersenne to the effect that Gui d'Arezzo had made music, or at any rate plain-chant, "easier to learn in six days than it had been before in six years".

- 4. From the musical point of view, the text in trope-form was either adapted to a fragment of the original chant, or else the trope was composed on a variation of this chant; sometimes an entirely new melody was introduced. In some tropes priority was given to purely musical inventions, such as cocalises which were devised to fit in between the different sections of the chant; following a procedure which was the opposite of that we have just described, the words were adapted to the music afterwards.
- 5. The Winchester collection, in this respect, has perhaps no claim to the priority attributed to it by some musicologists; others, of equal authority, think that its contents are derived from a manuscript originally belonging to the school of St. Martin of Tours, a copy of which may have been transmitted to Winchester via Fleury and Abingdon. In any case it shows how interested the English musicians were in the progress made by Continental polyphony and how quickly they assimilated it.
- 6. Henceforward the voices will no longer be confined to parallel movement; they will be allowed to proceed by contrary movement, and even to cross one another; the tenor is fixed in the lower register, the duplum in the higher; and this duplum now begins to be florid, i.e. the voice is given figurations of short notes to sing above the tenor—the latter being written in notes so long that in many cases it is thought that this part must have been entrusted to instruments in view of the very long breaths that would have been necessary had it been sung.
- 7. The polyphonic conductus is often based on a monodic conductus on which one, two, and very rarely three other voices have been superimposed. It is a religious chant on a text in the form of versified strophes of which the music is not borrowed from the Gregorian repertory, but freely invented—in a word, it represents the first step towards free composition. Moreover, by an imperceptible transition, the text is sometimes profane and eventually becomes a commentary on contemporary political events, thus breaking the last connection between the conductus and sacred music.
- 8. The folklore of the Nordic countries (Scandinavia and Iceland are proof of this) seems to show a preference for successions of thirds, the mechanics of which have been analysed by Curt Sachs, rather than for the Church modes based on the tetrachord. The most interesting fact that emerges from this study is the power of attraction exercised by the octave: when a singer sings in succession three ascending thirds, on reaching the last of these (which is in fact the seventh degree above the tonic) he instinctively sharpens this note by a semi-tone thus forming the major common chord. This would account for the presence, frequently found in the earliest known examples of popular song, and especially music for dancing (12th century) of a mode that is identical with our modern major scale.
- 9. The Chansons de geste are a creation of the eleventh century, the period during which scholars were engaged in idealizing the personage of Charlemagne. They are for the most part devoted to stories of the exploits of the Emperor's entourage;

their principal object was to provide recreation for the pilgrims who flocked to visit sanctuaries in France along roads which were bordered by the tombs and relics of the heroes whose exploits they celebrated. But Jean de Grouchy, the theoretician mentioned before, attributes to them another purpose. According to him, these *chansons* were sung "for the benefit of old people, workers and people of humble origin while they rested, so that, through hearing about the miseries of others they might forget their own and gladly take up their tasks again. In this way these *chansons* act as a safeguard for the community."

10. Notation by means of neumes written on lines was soon reduced to a relatively small number of signs, the chief of which was a black square which was the equivalent of the old punctum and, with a tail added, of the old virga; in certain note successions it was in the form of a diamond, while to indicate melisma grouping several notes, slurs were used connecting two or three squares in various ways.

An enormous step forward was taken about 1225 when it was found to be essential to indicate with some degree of precision rhythmic values. With this object musicians began by using the old "square" notation signs; the square without a tail will henceforward designate a note of long duration (longue) and the square with a tail a short one (brève); at first the longue was equivalent to two brèves, as in Latin metre, but towards the end of the century this system was changed, as we shall see later.

These two signs served their purpose so long as the music was conditioned by the metre of the texts it illustrated, and was confined to the simplest metrical modes: the trochaie (long—short), the iambie (short—long). Beyond these limits it was necessary to increase the number of duration signs, as the musical rhythm became more and more independent of the metre of the text. This was done by Robert de Sabilon, Jean de Garlande, and above all by Francon de Cologne who, in his Ars cantus mensurabilis (circ. 1260) laid down a system of notation completely independent of metrical modes. This was the real beginning of measured or proportional notation whose developments were to lead to the rhythmic conceptions of the present day.

At the end of the thirteenth century the complete scale of values comprised: the maxima, in the shape of a rectangle, with a tail (= two longues); the longue, a square with a tail (= three brèves); the brève, a square without a tail (= three semi-brèves); the semi-brève, which was diamond-shaped.

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The prevalence of the ternary division in this system is noteworthy; the only exception being the maxima which was, however, very rarely used. It is generally admitted that in adopting this division musicians intended to pay homage to the universal principle of perfection, the Trinity. There is nothing surprising in that when one remembers the extent to which the Middle Ages were permeated with symbolism. The Fathers of the Church used to compare the triangular form of the harp with that of the heart, and its seven strings (it might have many more) to the seven cardinal virtues. By a doubtful play on words St. Isidore of Seville derived the word corde (string) from eœur (heart)—"Chordas dictas a corde, quia sicut pulsus est cordis in pectore, ita pulsus chordae in cithara". In the fourteenth century Jean Gerson still looked upon drum-beats as representing the mortification of the flesh, and interpreted inequalities in the size of kettle-drums as symbolizing "the fear of him who humbles himself and the exaltation of him who puts his trust in Divine mercy...

Recent research, however, rejects the symbolical interpretation of the ternary division as having been thought of after the event. Dom Anselm Hughes believes that ternary time is really a group of six beats which has the advantage, as compared with a group of four, of being divisible either by two or by three. Thus it is possible for two voices to sing simultaneously in different rhythms, one in 3/2 time and the other in 2/3. It was probably these polyrhythmic possibilities and being able to pass smoothly from binary to ternary that influenced composers in their choice; and, as usual, the theoreticians followed after them.

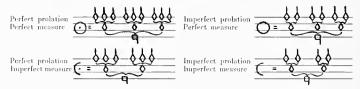
In practice this notation was difficult, owing to the fact that the note-values were not fixed, but could be altered according to their respective positions and the rhythmic mode in which the piece was written. To take only one example, a brève placed between two longues rendered the one that preceded it imperfect, that is to say, it deprived it of one beat so as to form with it a complete ternary measure, or perfectio. The lines, or slurs connecting several notes added still further to the complexity of the system of which we shall have further evidence at a later stage in its evolution.

11. He permitted thirds and sixths which Jean de Grouchy, who could not be accused of conservatism, found harsh. He escaped from the rigours of the ecclesiastical modes by allowing the sharpening or flattening of degrees of the scale other than the leading note. This is what was called 'false music' (musica ficta). He asserted "musica ficta est musica vera".

He was the first to write motets in which all the voices are governed by the principle of isorhythmics (which consisted originally in allotting to the 'liturgical tenor' part (canto fermo) a rhythmic design that remained unchanged from beginning to end, whatever modifications its melodic outline may have undergone. Pérotin had already made use of this system). He also forbade the succession of two consonant intervals between the same parts, thus anticipating the prohibition of consecutive fifths and octaves found in all the treatises on classical harmony.

12. It should be noted that any resemblance between this notation and our own is more apparent than real. On the one hand the signs for forms that are practically identical—the minime and our minim, the semi-minime and our crotchet, etc., indicate very different durations: actually, our crotchet is more or less equivalent to the semi-brève of the fifteenth century. On the other hand, the method of indicating time still conforms to a code inherited from a much earlier epoch (13th century) when 'triple' time was considered to be 'perfect'.

If a piece is in 'triple' time, a circle at the beginning of the stave shows that the brève is to be considered as divisible into three semi-brèves and the time is then 'perfect' (the circle, symbol of the Trinity, is the sign for perfection); if, in turn, the semi-brève is to be divisible into three fusae, this subdivision, called prolation parfaite, is indicated by a dot in the middle of the circle. If the brève is to be divisible by two, the time is called 'imperfect', and its sign is then a semi-circle placed at the beginning of the stave (in the course of centuries this semi-circle became the capital C which signifies in our notation 'common' time); this semi-circle is dotted if the semi-brève is divisible by two (prolation imparfaite):



The use of ties, or slurs, which was continued after the fifteenth century was also subjected to a body of rules and regulations which need not be gone into here. The object of all these conventions may well have been to surround the art of the composer of music with a certain amount of mystery. In the Speculum musicae of Jacques de Liége (14th century) we find this revealing phrase: "Music conceals a lot of hidden truths... it contains many secrets." It was prohably their desire to reserve for themselves a language accessible only to the initiated that led the old contrapuntists to cultivate assiduously the 'enigmatie' canon whose solution was only to be found in a 'puzzle phrase' or an unusual graphic presentation. These stimulating diversions outlived the period during which they were intensively cultivated; J. S. Bach and his contemporaries continued to practise them, and Haydn, Beethoven, Weber, and other masters nearer our own times made use of more or less 'enigmatic' canons to exchange, as between colleagues, wishes or reminiscences or to engage in friendly contests of skill. (We may mention in passing that these outworn devices often served as a mask for a certain licentiousness also inherited from a distant past.)

One more observation in parenthesis: it is a mistake to compare, as is sometimes done, these subtleties and complexities with those to be found in some contemporary music. With the old contrapuntists the obscurity lay in the method of presentation. Once this was deciphered, their language was seen to be normal and accessible to all music lovers. In the works of our avant-garde composers the actual musical content presents quite as many, if not more, problems as the style of writing.

- 13. After Dufay composers were no longer satisfied with the three voices-cantus, contratenor, tenor-which up to then had been considered sufficient for sacred music. Gradually at first, and then more systematically, a fourth voice was added beneath the tenor. The disposition of the voices was then as follows: cantus (today, soprano), altus (alto), tenor and bassus (bass), an arrangement which corresponds to the different registers of the human voice which resulted in so satisfactory a balance that it was later adopted in instrumental music to produce the various groups of chamber ensembles, as for example the quartet of viols and the modern string quartet. Now that the tenor was deprived of his old prerogatives, the next step was to provide all four voices with parts of equal interest, and the polyphonic texture then became sufficiently substantial to be able to dispense with instrumental support. Naturally Josquin did not feel obliged to write exclusively in four parts. He would give certain passages to three or four solo voices, or on the other hand would reinforce the chorus by adding two or three supplementary parts.
- 14. Description in music was by no means a novelty; as proof of this one has only to recall the fourteenth century chasses. But Janequin endows it with enough substance and relief, humour and, when the subject lends itself, poetry for a modern audience to enjoy his songs without having to evoke their "historical" interest. Unlike the musicians of our own day who have a guilty conscience when they write descriptive music and are apologetic or unwilling to admit that they have done so (cf. Honegger with regard to Pacific 231 and Rugby), Janequin, in dedicating to François de Lorraine, Duc de Guise, one of his Inventions musicales (1555) which was intended to celebrate the exploits of the Duke, stated explicitly: "I have depicted a battle recorded in sound as near to reality as I was able, including the words of command spoken by men and the sound of trumpets, bugles, cannon-fire and artillery and everything else to do with battlers and assaults."
- 15. The melody is in two sections, A and B, each covering one line of verse, so that in every strophe this AB figure is repeated four times.

The secular vocal music of this period included many other varieties, all more or less related to the frottole, at any rate in spirit. Among the most striking are the Canti carnascialeschi which were sung in Florence at Carnival time and reached the height of their popularity under Lorenzo the Magnificent.

They were of two kinds, of very different inspiration, either woven round legendary subjects, like the *Triumph of Ariadne* and *Bacchus*, or of a deliberately popular and descriptive nature like the old *caccia*, picturing the local trades—people, perfumers, millers, oil merchants, salesmen, foot-soldiers, beggars, and unhappily married girls, packed with more or less licentious jokes and words with a double meaning.

Intended to be sung in the open air, these songs are in note-for-note harmony: the verse structure is extremely varied. It is worth noting that musicians like Alexander Agricola and Hendrik Isaac (we shall come across them later in connection with the German lied) did not think it beneath them to compose canti carnascialeschi.

Of somewhat similar inspiration are the villote and villanesche (the villota was a dancing-song in the popular style; the villanesca, of a pseudo-rustic nature, was invented to ridicule the excessive sophistication of the madrigal); the dialect songs, ferrarese, bergamasche, venetiane, mantovane etc...; the 'parody songs', such as the moresca which depicted the Moorish slaves of fiction, or the tedesca imitating the accent of Germans attempting to sing in Italian (e.g. Matona—i.e. Madonna—mia cara of Orlando di Lasso).

Most of these types of song are suitable for dancing as, for example, the *canzonetta*, and especially the *balletto* which

flourished in the second half of the century. One of the most famous musicians who specialized in this form, Gio-Giacomo Gastoldi, referred to his own as: Balletti a cinque voci, con li suoi versi per cantare, sonare et ballare (1591). Originally the balletto was not confined to any particular rhythm, but when Gastoldi wrote, it was nearly always a dancing-song in binary time, rather fast, with a characteristic rhythm typical of the country round Venice. A perfect example of it is to be found, unaltered, in the finale of one of the best known of Vivaldi's concertos for orchestra (Turin Collection Foà III).



The balletto, like many villanesche, often has a refrain consisting of the syllables fa, la, fa la la, which are not sung to the notes of the same name, but are equivalent to the 'fol-di-rol', etc., of folk-song tunes.

The balletto (including the refrain), as practised by German composers like Hans Leo Hassler and Englishmen like Thomas Morley, will have a part to play in the development of the instrumental suite.

- 16. Any exhaustive study of the subject could not omit a reference to the 'spiritual' madrigals (madrigali spirituali). From a musical point of view their resources are the same as those of the secular madrigal although, owing to their religious inspiration their means of expression are more restricted. Perfect examples of this type of madrigal are to be found in Palestrina. We shall see when we turn to England and Germany what opportunities of expansion the madrigal gave to Italian music.
- 17. Before leaving the British Isles, mention must be made, in the domain of popular song, of a form which was already ancient, the carol, dating from the first half of the fifteenth century. Originally this was a Christmas song. Later the term was applied to all sorts of religious songs (non-liturgical) of a cheerful nature. In the middle of the sixteenth century it was defined as "a song on any subject consisting of uniform strophes together with a burden". This was a little refrain sung to meaningless syllables, like the Italian Fa, la, la and similar vocables to be met with in the folk music of almost every European country. Harmonized at first in two or three parts, in the style of the medieval gymel, the carol subsequently assumed a rather more sophisticated, sometimes even contrapuntal, form, although this in no way detracted from the vogue of the more popular type.
- 18. There is one blot on this picture which we shall encounter again in a more acute form in connection with instrumental music, and that is the certainty—however regrettable—that the sustained chords in this music, whose bareness accentuates their ineffable serenity, were ornamented by the performer at sight, as were the adagios in sonatas by Corelli. This practice was imposed by the tradition of the Sistine Chapel and, generally speaking, by the tradition of a whole epoch when, to quote an expression used by Adrien Petit Coclicus, a composer and theoretician writing about 1552, it was generally considered that a melody as set down by the composer was vulgar and insipid unless ornamented by the singer "just as meat is flavoured by the addition of salt and mustard."
- 19. The clavichord was then called a monochord (owing to a curious poverty of vocabulary this instrument, which had nearly 20 strings and a keyboard, was still called by the name which had only been appropriate when it had one string only and was used exclusively for acoustical research purposes. It continued to bear this false appellation in France and Italy until the seventeenth century: monacordo, manicorde, manichordion).

It is not known whether the name échiquier (or chekker, or exaquier) mentioned in French, English and Spanish sources of the period, referred to the clavichord or the harpsichord. The first échiquier of which anything is known was one which a Frenchman, Jehan Perrot, had made and which Edward III of England gave as a present to his ex-prisoner Jean le Bon in 1360. In 1388 Jean II of Aragon wrote from Saragossa to his brother-in-law Philippe le Hardi asking him to procure an exaquier "an instrument resembling the organ and sounding by means of strings", as well as an organist "abte de tocar exaquier et los petits orguens".

20. The earliest German organ tablatures (15th and early 16th centuries) use ordinary notation for the upper parts, the lower voices being represented by letters; after 1550 only letters and duration signs were used. Spanish organ tablatures have four or five horizontal parallel lines, each of which represents one of the voices in the polyphony. On each line the notes are indicated by figures, from 1 to 7. It should be noted that from the sixteenth century onward collections of keyboard music in ordinary notation are called 'tablatures'; in this case 'writing in tablature' merely means arranging, or scoring motets or songs on two staves (as in our arrangements of symphonies for piano solo) as opposed to the notation used for the separate parts.

The lute tablatures printed after 1507 in Italy, 1511 in Germany, 1529 in France are, in spite of their rather mysterious appearance, merely the application of a very simple procedure whereby a performer, knowing nothing of the theory of music, is able to play the instrument: the letters or figures placed on lines each of which represents a string therefore having no connection with the stave) show the player where to put his fingers. In French tablature a indicates (for every string) the open string, b the first semi-tone, c the second semi-tone, d the minor third, e the major third, etc. As each interval is marked on the finger-board by a nut,

this makes the music easy to read.

- 21. The variation is found here in two distinct forms. One, specifically English and already exploited by a precursor like Hugh Aston before 1520, was the ground, a basso ostinato over which the upper voices embroider different counterpoints at each recurrence of the theme. Later this was to be the principle of the passacaglia. The other form, the earliest examples of which to attain the status of an art-form must be sought in Spain in the repertory of the lute (Luis de Narvaez), the viol (Diego Ortiz) and the organ (Cabezon), was the so-called 'ornamental' variation in which the theme (generally in the upper voices) is embroidered and paraphrased in a different way each time it appears. To this type belong the airs variés of Mozart for harpsichord or pianoforte.
- 22. There are two main types of archlute having the same soundbody as the lute: the theorbo, with a relatively short neck, and the chitarrone with a much longer neck, measuring a yard or more, both being fitted with at least 20 strings, the fifth, sixth and eighth of which, attached to a second set of tuning pegs, can only be used as open strings and sound the lowest notes.
- 23. The first Airs de Cour (Court airs) were transcriptions of polyphonic vocal works for voice and lute in which the melody clearly takes precedence over the polyphony. As this form developed, several varieties can be distinguished, of which the most interesting are the Air de Cour proper, freed from its square-cut rhythm, the song (chanson) for solo voice in binary or ternary time resembling the song for dancing (chanson dansée), transcriptions for voice and lute of Protestant psalms and the song narration. By its dramatic character, its chromaticism, its repeated notes, its rhythms, now forceful, now relaxed, this last form differs in every respect, as far as expression is concerned, from the 'non-measured' chanson. It prepares the way, in fact, for the recitative of French opera.
- 24. Modern tonality was to be codified a generation later by Rameau on a basis consisting essentially of a three-note chord formed by two superimposed thirds, the fundamental being the tonic (common chord), the fifth degree the dominant, and the sixth, the sub-dominant. But although the tonal system with all its consequences as regards cadences, modulations, and the resolution of discords only came into existence as an organized whole about the year 1680, it was already in the air at the beginning of the pre-classical era.
- 25. In polyphonic writing the bass was the lowest part, but it could on occasion 'cross over' the tenor; but harmonic theory tended to keep it in the lowest register. Moreover the development of music for solo key-board instruments (organ, clavichord, harpsichord) rendered meaningless to a large extent the 'crossing' of the lower voices which were no longer differentiated by their respective timbres. Hence the conception of a bass which would no longer be a voice with the same freedom of movement as the others, but a sequence of the lowest notes

irrespective of the part, or voice, to which they belonged: this was called a *continuo*. As in the meantime polyphony was reduced to supplying a harmonic support for the principal melody, it soon became the custom to write in only the *continuo*, adding a few figures above or below the most important notes. In this figured bass, 3 meant that the third above should be played, 4 the fourth, and 5 the fifth, etc. (the sign for the fifth and octave were often omitted, being taken for granted).

26. Monteverdi's orchestration, when he decides to give it his fullest attention, is no less original than the other elements in his technique. It is especially remarkable for its flexibility. In Orfeo he employs a very large selection of instruments: 10 viole da brazzo (various kinds of violins), 2 violini piccoli alla francese (these are believed to be of the type used by French dancing-masters), 3 viole da gamba, 2 contrebasses de viole (bass viols), 4 trombones, 2 cornets, 1 small flute (flauto alle vigesima seconda), one high trumpet (clarino), 3 muted trumpets (trombe sordine), 2 bass lutes (chitarrone), 2 harpsichords, 2 wooden-piped organs (organi di legno), 1 reed organ, 1 double harp.

But all these instruments do not play together. Monteverdi uses them in groups to create different sound effects which he varies sometimes in the course of a single scene, or even a single air; and in this respect he has come much nearer to the modern conception of orchestration than many of his successors in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Another noticeable feature is the use made of leading motifs in certain symphonic passages repeated at crucial moments

in the drama.

From the point of view of actual presentation, the 1609 edition of Orleo is the first example of an operatic score in which the instrumental parts in the opening toccata (the oldest known operatic overture) and the ritornelli are written vertically one under the other, in the modern fashion. There are remote historical precedents for this: almost all the polyphonic music prior to 1225 (organa, and the conductus of the schools of Saint-Martial and Notre-Dame) were written in this way. But nearer the time of Orfeo almost the only example of this notation is to be found in the madrigals of Cyprien de Rore which were published in score, with bar-lines, in 1577. A recent discovery made by Mme Suzanne Clercx affords evidence that the sixteenth-century polyphonists may have written their works in score on slates, which were rubbed out as soon as the vocal and instrumental parts had been copied.

27. The history of the Overture can be told here in broad outline. Prior to Scarlatti's innovation the early operas had been preceded, as in Monteverdi's Orfeo, by a toccata or prelude of very simple design or, in later years, by a more complex piece consisting of a slow and solemn preamble and a canzona in several sections. It was this type of overture, as exemplified in Landi's San Alessio (1632), which was generally adopted by the Venetian school (in San Alessio the second and third acts each have a prelude, conceived on different lines, in three sections, quick, slow, quick, which foreshadows the Neapolitan overture). We shall examine separately the so called 'French overture' when we come to Lully when we shall see that it has a certain resemblance to the old type of preambule-canzona. With the classical era the overture underwent many changes, both in form and general character. Sometimes it was a preparation for the opening scene of the opera (cf. the storm in the overture to Gluck's Iphigenia in Tauris, 1778). Here, as elsewhere, there are much earlier examples of the same thing, e.g. the first subject of the overture to Stradella's La forza dell'amor paterno is the same as the air with which the first act hegins. Generally, it aims at creating the atmosphere in which the action will take place (cf. Don Giovanni or The Magic Flute) either in the free manner of a symphonic poem, or else by adopting the form of a movement in a symphony; it can also be, as it often is in the operas of Rossini and the French ninetcenth-century masters, a potpourri of the principal airs in the opera; or, again, the composer may simply wish to write a few brilliant pages which can be transferred, if necessary, from one opera to another so as to provide some entertainment for the spectators already in their seats until the late-comers have arrived. There are many examples of this type in the youthful operas of Rossini.

- 28. A ballet of the kind that was danced at Carnival time, in which the King would take part, generally consisted of some thirty entrées in groups of four or five, each group beginning with a récit (other récits might be sung in between). The entrées were either dances or pantomimes or musical, acrobatic or humorous exhibitions, rather like the 'numbers' in our music-hall Revues. The mountebanks left the stage before the final grand ballet which brought the proceedings to a grandiose conclusion. A final récit was then sung played by the Court musicians, and it was at this moment that the King and his noblemen appeared and danced, sumptuously attired, before an audience which numbered many thousands.
- 29. The catch, in the form of a canon, perpetuated the very ancient tradition of the round (which goes back to the fourteenth century (cf. Summer is icumen in). But the catch became very popular and democratic as can be see from the collections published between 1652 abd 1658 by John Hilton under the title Catch that catch can. They were sung everywhere, even in the taverns—hence the ever increasing ribaldry of the words. The texts set to music by Purcell are no exception so that in modern editions they have had to be bowdlerized, or even replaced altogether.
- 30. The same might be said of the seven books of François Duval, published from 1704 to 1720, and remarkable for their ripe musicality and a style of instrumental writing more varied even than that of Corelli. This progress was steadily maintained in the works of Senaillé, Jacques Aubert (the first in France to adopt the concerto form), Quentin the younger, and François Francœur.
- 31. "I agree that nothing is so amusing for oneself or so conducive to good relations with others as to be a good accompanist—but how unjust! No one bothers to praise an accompanist, whereas anyone who excels in these *Pièces* enjoys for himself alone the attention and applause of his audience..."
- 32. Some attention should, in fairness, be paid to the school of the bass viol which, until well into the eighteenth century continued to represent, in opposition to the violincello, the qualities most appreciated in the past by music lovers in France—namely a subdued and somewhat veiled softness of tone. Sainte-Colombe, de Caix d'Hervelois and Antoine Forqueray were among the best violists of their day. The greatest of all was Marin Marais (1656-1728), author of some operas one of which, Alcyone, contained a symphonic interlude, la Tempête, which was celebrated for a long time. But it was his chamber music, some 800 pieces for one, two or three viols that merits attention. These pieces are remarkable for their freedom of invention, conciseness and a combination of wit and sentiment that constantly reminds one of Couperin. Like him, Marais delights in ingenious and realistic descriptions. His Tableau de l'Opération de la Taille (Lithotomy) contains annotations like: "Here the incision is made... the forceps are inserted... here the stone is extracted... here the patient has almost lost his voice"; but pieces like La Petite

Brillante, Le Gracieux, etc., suggest rather than portray, and the majority of the pieces consist of stylized dances, sometimes followed by variations in the form of preludes and fantasies having no sort of extra-musical significance.

The violincello was slower to make its way and gain favour than the violin had been, its progress being impeded by the French preference for the bass viol and by fact that there were many excellent performers on this instrument. The first French violincellist of renown was Berteau of Valenciennes, former viol player, whose appearance at a Concert Spirituel in 1739 caused a sensation. Among his numerous pupils were Tillière, the two Jansons, Cupis the younger, and Jean-Pierre Duport, known as Duport l'aîné who was one of the first to undertake concert tours abroad and who was invited by Frederick II of Prussia to Berlin, where he stayed from 1773 until his death in 1818.

Finally, the transverse, or German flute to which Lully had assigned an important role in his operatic scores, had attracted virtuoso performers who had built up for it, from the end of the seventeenth century onwards, a repertory equal to that of the violin. Among these were, notably, Jacques Hotteterre, de Descoteaux, Pierre Gaultier, Michel de la Barre, Naudot, Boismortier, Chédeville, several of whom also wrote for the musette, hurdy-gurdy or bassoon. The most illustrious was Michel Blavet (1700-1768) who could appear alongside Leclair at a Concert Spirituel and be equally well received. The future Frederick II, when still only a royal prince, tried in vain to retain him in his service.

33. There was one important feature in the musical life of the period we have been considering, and that was the creation of the public concert which was initiated in England. It was in 1672 that John Banister, a talented violinist who had for some time been in charge of the King's music, organized daily concerts in a hall hired for this purpose in White Friars. These were continued until 1678. In that year Thomas Britton, a coal merchant, started a series of weekly concerts, for which admission was at first free; later a charge was imposed in the form of a yearly subscription, plus one penny for coffee. These concerts took place in the cellars under his shop. They lasted until Britton's death in 1714, and were attended by the leading music lovers in the capital who were able to hear there all the greatest musicians of the town, or any distinguished visitors, including Handel himself. In 1713 Telemann founded weekly concerts at Frankfortam-Main, and in Paris Philidor, in 1729, had the idea of instituting the Concerts Spirituels which were intended to fill the gap caused by the closing of opera-houses during certain periods of the ecclesiastical year. Originally, only sacred music was supposed to be played there, but the programme policy was extended so as to make a place for secular music as well as for famous virtuosi, and the number of concerts was increased so that until 1791 the Concerts Spirituels became one of the outstanding features of musical life in France. Most of the eighteenth century European concert organizations took them as a model.

### This book was made with the collaboration of Monique Schneider-Maunoury and of Marie-Geneviève de La Coste-Messelière

#### Lay-out by Robert Delpire

#### Color photographs

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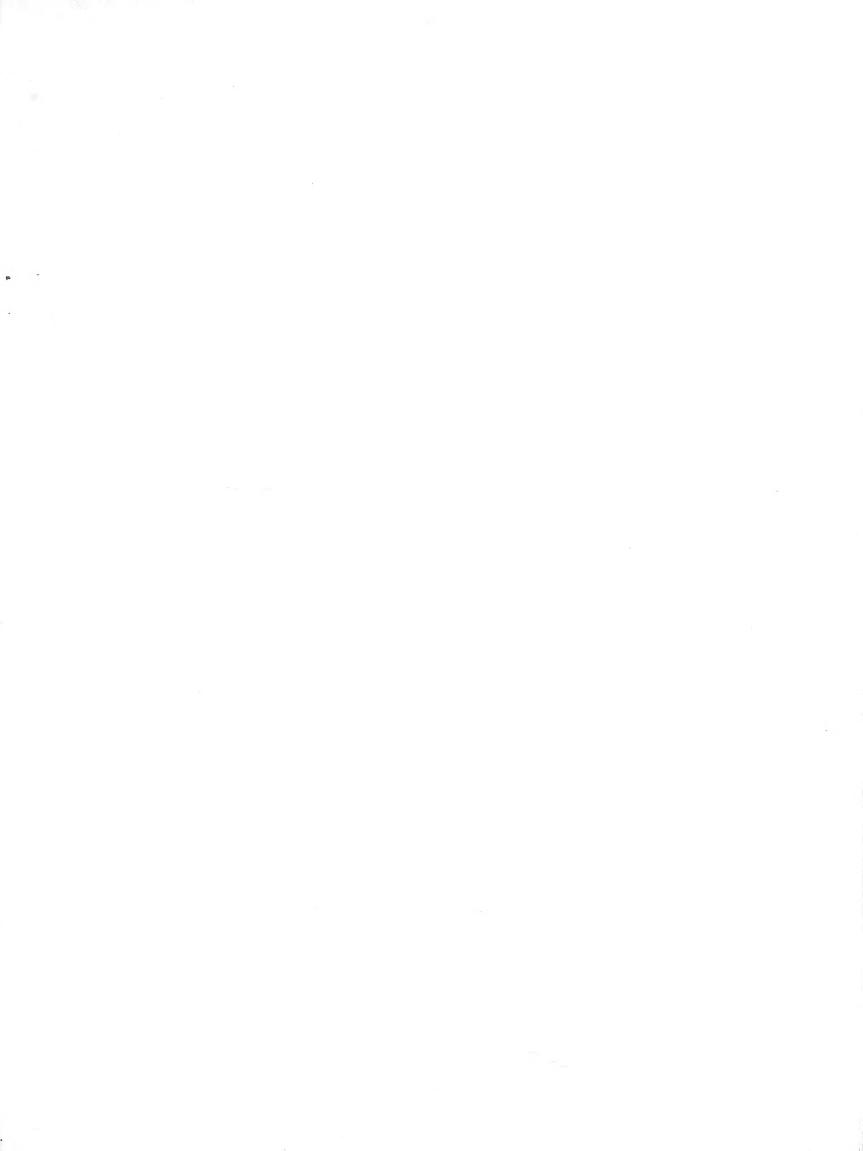
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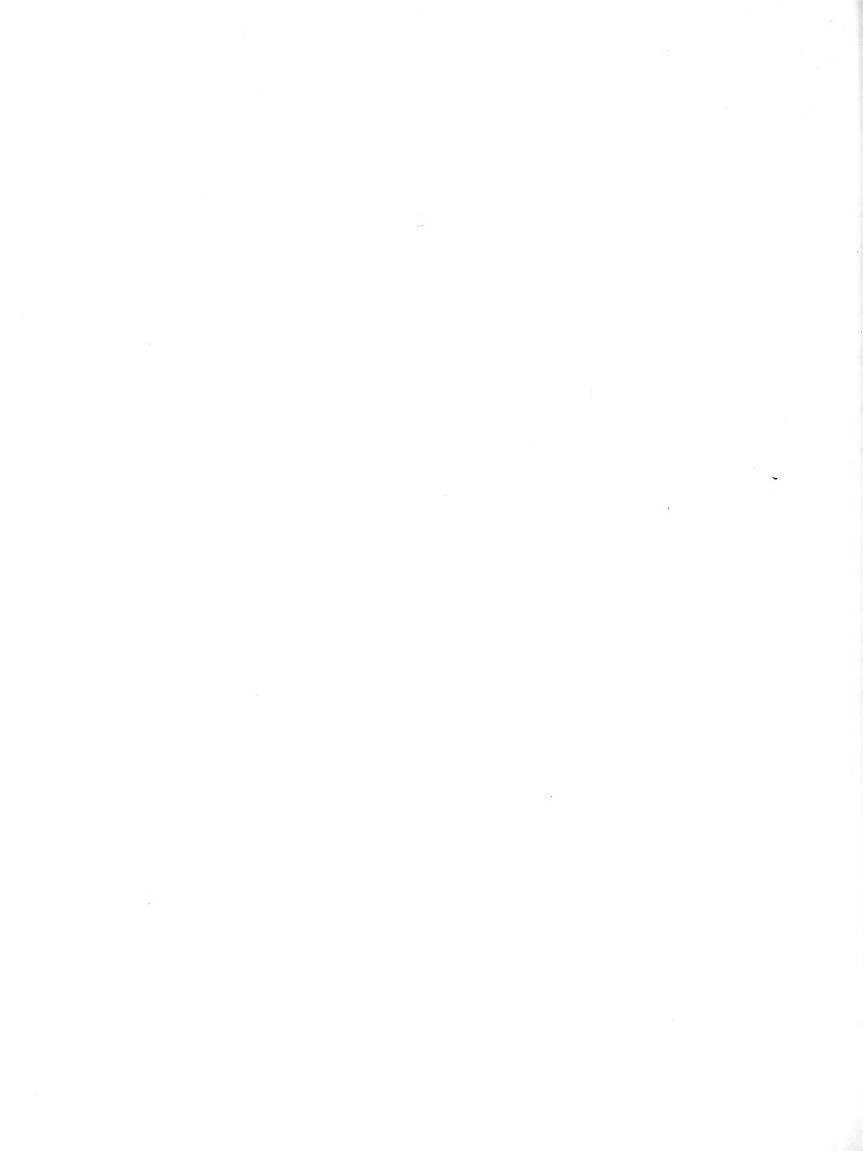
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